John H. Russell.

THE

COMIC THEATRE.

VOL. II.

THE

COMIC THEATRE.

BEING

A FREE TRANSLATION

Of all the Beſt

FRENCH COMEDIES.

BY

SAMUEL FOOTE, Eſq. and Others.

VOL. II.

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THE

IMAGINARY OBSTACLE.

A COMEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LISIMON.
LICANDER.
LEANDER.
VALERE.
CRISPIN.
PASQUIN.
A Footman.

JULIA.
The COUNTESS de la Pépiniere.
ANGELICA.
NERINA.

Scene, LISIMON's Houſe.

THE

IMAGINARY OBSTACLE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter VALERE *and* PASQUIN, *at different Doors.*

VALERE. [*Speaking as he enters.*]

NO, no, you may talk till doom's day; I will never consent to it, I tell you!

PASQUIN. [*Aside.*]

So! here's my hair-brain'd master! What's in the wind now?

VALERE.

A perverse old fool!

PASQUIN. [*Aside.*]

He's in a passion.

VALERE.

'Tis a folly to think of living any longer with him: I'll leave the houſe to day.

PASQUIN.

Pray, ſir, who may you be exclaiming againſt in this manner?

VALERE.

My father.

PASQUIN.

Perfectly dutiful, and well-bred, upon my word! And if he had chanc'd to have overheard you——

VALERE.

Oh! I wiſh for nothing better! I hope, from my ſoul, he did not loſe a ſingle ſyllable.

PASQUIN.

Heavens forbid! you were an undone man.

VALERE.

Why, doſt think that I ſtand in awe of him? no, no; I am no ſchool-boy now, Paſquin.

PASQUIN.

Come, come, ſir; no playing with edged tools: School-boy quotha! egad, if the old gentleman takes it into his head, he'll treat you juſt the ſame as if you was but ſtill in your grammar.

VALERE. [*Cocking his hat.*]

How! my father pretend to treat me in that manner! 'Sdeath! I would preſently let him ſee——

PASQUIN.

Mum! here he comes.

VALERE.

I'll retire then.

PASQUIN.

No, no; come back; it is not him.

VALERE.

VALERE.

'Sblood! do you make a jeſt of me? You put me in ſuch a fright!

PASQUIN.

Lord, ſir! I thought you ſaid, juſt now, you was not to be frighten'd by him.

VALERE.

True; but I've ſome remains of weakneſs about me that I can't account for——however, I have now recovered myſelf, and am ready to face him.

PASQUIN.

To fly him, you mean.——You fine gentlemen are furiouſly brave, till danger approaches——But, take my advice, ſir, reform your conduct, and you will have no longer occaſion to ſtand in awe of your father.

VALERE.

Hearkye, mr. raſcal! how much does the old gentleman give you for playing the tutor?

PASQUIN.

Pleaſant enough that!—give me? why, he thinks that it is I who ſpoil you; whereas, God knows, I have too great a regard for you to do that.

VALERE.

Inſolent ſcoundrel!

PASQUIN.

Come, ſir, raillery apart, you muſt think of ſome method to ſatisfy him.

VALERE.

Well, but how am I to do it?

PASQUIN.

By behaving directly contrary to what you have done hitherto.

VALERE.

But what has been my crime?

PASQUIN.

Crimes are out of the queſtion: I am ſpeaking of follies only. For inſtance; was I not this very morning witneſs to the converſation between your father and you? While the old gentleman was giving you wholeſome advice, you turn'd it all into ridicule, by your manner of anſwering him.

VALERE.

Me!

PASQUIN.

Yes, you! Shall I convince you of it by repeating the whole converſation as it paſſed? for I have it all at my tongue's end.

VALERE.

Oh! by all means, let's hear it; for I ſhall be glad to judge cooly, whether or not I was to blame.

PASQUIN.

Well then, ſuppoſe me your father. Here I ſit. The door opens. In you come; and exactly in this manner——[*Here* Paſquin *by turns puts on the airs of a pert fop, and a ſerious old gentleman.*] So, ſon! good morrow to you——Oh! ſir, your moſt devoted! Did you ſend to ſpeak with me, ſir?——Yes, ſirrah! Where was you all laſt night?—Laſt night, ſir? Let me ſee; oh! I ſpent part of the evening with a ſet of friends at the tavern; and from thence we went to a private ball.——That's falſe, ſir: I know very well what ball you was at; and if you don't mend your manners, I ſhall ſend you over to Germany to dance there.——Gad's curſe me if I don't think you would die, if you did not read me a lecture every day! For heaven's ſake, what is it you would have me do? May I periſh if I ſee what you can be

be angry at!——Why, blockhead, do you imagine that I can be pleaſed to ſee you continually in the midſt of that herd of fops and fools you keep company with? fellows, whoſe principles are as light as the feather in their hats. Can I bear with patience the monkey airs you give yourſelf? the ridiculous extravagance of your dreſs, which you call faſhion? the perpetual round of debauchery in which you live? and that inſolence of behaviour, which, tho' it may impoſe upon the weak and illiterate, makes you the ſcorn of every man of underſtanding?——Why, dear ſir, all young people of condition do juſt the ſame. One muſt follow the faſhion, you know.—Don't tell me of the faſhion, ſir! you ſhall follow my faſhion——Well, time will ſhow; tol lol derol——'Sblood! do you make a jeſt of me, ſirrah? I'll teach you—

[Paſquin *offers to ſtrike him.*]

VALERE.

Zounds! what are you going to do?

PASQUIN.

I'll break every bone in your rebellious hide.

[*Chaſing* Valere *about the ſtage.*]

VALERE.

'Sdeath, ſcoundrel! you will not have the inſolence——

PASQUIN.

Odſo, ſir! I aſk ten thouſand pardons. I was ſo carry'd away by the warmth of action, that I abſolutely thought myſelf your father. However, you muſt own I am no bad actor: for the truth is, if you had not made the beſt of your way out of the room, the real ſcene would have ended exactly in this manner. After all, my good maſter, it is high time you ſhould begin to reform. It is now above three months ſince your mother-

in-law, that is to be, came out of the country, with her daughter Angelica, your intended wife; and here they have lodg'd, ever ſince, at your father's requeſt, and have been witneſſes to the whole of your behaviour; which, by the bye, cannot have given them any very high idea of you.——In the name of fortune, ſir, do you intend to lead this life when you are marry'd?

VALERE.

Puppy! Do people marry to mend their lives? 'Sblood! I ſhould be glad to ſee any wife pretend to controul me. Look at the reſt of the young-marry'd fellows about town; how do they behave? Why, on the wedding-day they are all love and fondneſs; but, ever afterwards, they follow their pleaſures without reſtraint.

PASQUIN.

And their wives too, I ſuppoſe——What bleſſed fruits ſuch an union muſt produce!

VALERE.

Beſides, to deal ſincerely with you, I have but a very ſlight inclination for Angelica; and I believe, before it is long, I ſhall have none at all.

PASQUIN.

What fault do you find with her?

VALERE.

In the firſt place, ſhe has too much wit.

PASQUIN.

That indeed is not to be borne with in a wife.

VALERE.

Then, ſhe is poring over a book from morning to night, and pretends to a world of learning.

PASQUIN.

The remains of her country breeding. A town life will cure her of that fault.

VALERE.

VALERE.

And ſhe loves me with a paſſion like that of a heroine in a Romance. Whenever we meet, ſhe overwhelms me with a flood of high-flown ſpeeches and exalted ſentiments, that weary me to death.

PASQUIN.

I believe it: for noble ſentiments are as unintelligible to the fine gentlemen of the preſent age, as Greek and Latin.

VALERE.

But you muſt own, that the young creature whom my father lately took out of the convent, upon the death of her mother, is infinitely more engaging than Angelica.

PASQUIN.

Julia, you mean. I muſt confeſs they differ widely in their diſpoſitions. Angelica is grave and languiſhing; Julia, gay and ſprightly. Angelica has ſomething ſtudy'd in her manner; Julia has all the eaſe that an acquaintance with the polite world inſpires. In a word; I ſhould chuſe Julia for a miſtreſs; but ſhould prefer Angelica for a wife.

VALERE.

I am reſolv'd to have a little private converſation with Nerina, Julia's maid. I know ſhe is her miſtreſs's confident, and——

PASQUIN.

Hold, ſir! with your favour, that Nerina is my wife; and I have no inclination for her holding any private conference with you.

VALERE.

Pſha! you are an aſs.

PASQUIN.

I am none of your faſhionable huſbands, I. I love my wife.

VALERE.

Is that any reaſon I may not ſpeak to her?

PASQUIN.

In my preſence, as much as you pleaſe; but, in private, I beg to be excus'd.

VALERE.

Do you know, mr. jackanapes, to whom you are talking?

PASQUIN.

Sir, I am ready to allow you your prerogative as a maſter; and, at the ſame time, I'll preſerve mine as an huſband.

VALERE.

That I concern myſelf very little about; and ſhall act juſt as——but, 'ſdeath! here's Angelica.

SCENE II.

Enter ANGELICA, *muſing.*

[*She comes forward without perceiving* Valere *and* Paſquin.]

ANGELICA.

No news of Valere yet! I hardly ever ſee him now: I muſt confeſs his indifference ſurprizes me, and even gives me concern.

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere, *aſide.*]

Do you hear that, ſir?

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

Upon my ſoul ſhe is an agreeable girl.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

I think ſhe might pleaſe any man.

ANGELICA.

ANGELICA. [*Perceiving* Valere.]

Oh! are you there ſir? where have you been ſo long, pray?

VALERE.

I am juſt come from my father, madam, who has put me in a terrible ill humour; and I was telling my complaints to Paſquin here.

ANGELICA.

Now, in my opinion, I was the proper perſon to have been made acquainted with your uneaſineſſes. We are apt to ſeek advice and conſolation from thoſe we love: but, of late, you ſeem no longer to deſire my company; you even avoid me.

VALERE.

I avoid you, madam? How unjuſt is the reproach! Aſk Paſquin, he will tell you——

PASQUIN.

Me, ſir!

VALERE.

That I was this inſtant ſaying to him how lovely and amiable I thought you.

ANGELICA.

And muſt I hear thoſe things from him? Do you grudge me, then, the pleaſure of hearing them from your own lips?

VALERE.

No, certainly, madam; but, upon my ſoul, I am fearful of wearying you with a continual repetition of the ſame thing over and over again. Every one has a peculiar method of ſhewing their love: for my part, when I have once ſaid, I love, I think that I have done all that can be required of a lover. I have no notion of thoſe inſipid, tireſome, whining fellows, who are for ever on their knees before their miſtreſſes, and repeating

ing the ſame dull ſtory a thouſand times over. Adorable creature! how much I love you! I would ſuffer ten thouſand deaths rather than be falſe to the charmer of my ſoul! But ſay, my lovely creature, will you be ever thus kind? will you always bleſs me with your love? Then the lady, ſhe anſwers in the ſame ſtrain; and this they do every time they meet. Now, this is unſupportable to me; beſides, a man who is perpetually talking of his paſſion, grows tired of it at laſt, and wonders how he ever came to be in love.

ANGELICA.

You could not have found a better excuſe for indifference. But I am not a perſon to be impos'd upon by a flow of words. Indeed, Valere, you have a great deal of wit, but I plainly perceive you are a ſtranger to love.

VALERE.

A ſtranger to love! You ſee, Paſquin, how I am us'd. Who now is to blame of us two?

PASQUIN.

The perſon who ſpeaks with the leaſt ſincerity.

VALERE.

This lad, madam, knows my moſt ſecret thoughts, and he can juſtify———

PASQUIN.

Oh yes! I can aſſure you, madam, my maſter is far from being a ſtranger to love. If he has any fault, it is that of loving rather too much.

VALERE.

He ſays very true.

PASQUIN.

And I was blaming him for it juſt as you enter'd.

ANGELICA.

I profeſs I never obſerv'd any thing like it in him; but, however ſatirical you may be upon paſſionate lovers, ſir, I muſt tell you, that love never diſcovers itſelf ſo plainly, as by aſſiduity, proteſtations, and ſervices. It is better to ſay the ſame things an hundred times over, than not to ſay them with tenderneſs. No, no, Valere, I can never be perſuaded that you love me.

VALERE.

Oh! by heavens, madam, if nothing but a few oaths are wanting, I am ready to ſwear——

PASQUIN.

That he loves you as well as a man can a woman he intends to make his wife.

ANGELICA.

There it is! He knows I'm deſign'd for his wife, and that title has given him a diſlike to me beforehand. How different are your ſentiments and mine, Valere? The thought, that you are one day to become my huſband, makes you, if poſſible, a thouſand times more dear to me. A tender and virtuous heart is ſuſceptible of the ſtrongeſt paſſions, when duty gives a ſanction to its inclinations.

PASQUIN.

Madam, nothing in nature can be more juſt and noble than your obſervation. But permit me to aſſure you, that all theſe fine things are thrown away upon my maſter; he does not underſtand a ſyllable of them: nay, in my conſcience, I believe there are very few of your own ſex, in Paris, a whit better acquainted with them than himſelf, except indeed a few venerable dowagers, that flouriſh'd in the beginning of Lewis XIV's. reign. You talk, madam, like a young lady who has

has been bred up in the country all her life. We make love in quite a different manner: for inſtance; a gentleman goes to an aſſembly or a ridotto, or a rout, or any public place of diverſion; there he ſingles out the lady he thinks moſt agreeable and kind-hearted in the company: he begins his attack with ogling her at a diſtance; then finds means to get nearer and nearer by degrees; takes an opportunity to ſqueeze her hand; begs the favour of a ſingle word with her: ſhe grants him the hearing: he immediately declares his paſſion: (for this is always done at firſt ſight) if the lady is offended, which, however, ſeldom happens to be the caſe, he makes her a reſpectful bow, and drops the converſation: if ſhe liſtens to him, he proceeds to oaths, vows, and proteſtations. The fair one replies with an obliging ſmile, and the buſineſs is ſettled. After this, they viſit every where together; are always of the ſame party; join in abuſing one another's friends behind their backs: and, in ſhort, are inſeparable ſo long as their paſſion for each other continues. But, when either party begins to be tired of the amour, the gentleman draws off, the lady retreats, and they both go in ſearch of ſome freſh adventure. This, madam, is a full and true account of the riſe, progreſs, and concluſion, of all the faſhionable love affairs in this great metropolis.

ANGELICA.

I am no longer ſurprized at the politeneſs of the gentlemen of the preſent age, and the prodigious growth of gallantry.

PASQUIN.

The war! the war! is the occaſion of theſe irregularities. Our young fellows are ſo uſed to carry places ſword in hand, that they attack a lady as they

they would a fortreſs, and expect her to ſurrender at the firſt ſummons. It is to be hoped a peace will ſettle things upon their former footing.

ANGELICA.

But I expect that you, Valere, will, in your paſſion for me, diſtinguiſh yourſelf from the giddy young fellows of your age; and, by your example, endeavour to bring tender and virtuous love once more into faſhion.

VALERE.

Upon my ſoul, madam, I love you with as much tenderneſs as I poſſibly can.

PASQUIN.

My maſter ſpeaks the truth, I aſſure you, madam.

ANGELICA.

That is ſaying nothing. I want to reform your heart, and make it capable of a paſſion as delicate as my own. We muſt read romances together, Valere; I have a large collection of thoſe uſeful and affecting works: there you will learn that the nobleſt and moſt refined love ever tended to the hymenëal ſtate; and that marriage, inſtead of deſtroying the tender paſſion, always improved and increaſed it.

VALERE.

All this may be mighty fine in romance; but do you imagine I could ever bear to read ſuch traſh? I'd as ſoon ſtudy Coke upon Littleton. Romances, quotha!

ANGELICA.

And yet you muſt abſolutely comply with this, if you have any deſign to pleaſe me; but here's my mother.

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

So, here's an additional plague!

SCENE

SCENE III.

Enter COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Good morrow, ſon-in-law.

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

Son-in-law! the devil take her country breeding!

COUNTESS.

What were you two talking about? Don't let me interrupt you.

ANGELICA.

We were upon the ſubject of reading, madam; and I was recommending to Mr. Valere——

COUNTESS.

I am extremely glad of it. Nothing improves the underſtanding like reading, eſpecially of romance; works of that kind furniſh an inexhauſtible ſource of learning. The late Count, my thrice honoured conſort, and I, uſed to read them night and day: they were ſo moving! ſo moving!——

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

Oh! we are got to the late Count. I wonder ſhe had not brought him upon the carpet before.

COUNTESS.

Would you think that my late lord and I——

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

What, again!

COUNTESS.

My late lord and I, I ſay, read the grand Cyrus from beginning to end in one week; and it furniſhed us with ſuch an overflowing of fondneſs for each other——

PASQUIN.

I preſume then your ladyſhip found ſome very agreeable conſequences from theſe ſtudies.

COUNTESS.

Inſomuch, that my late dear lord and I loved each other to the day of our ſeparation, with the tenderneſs of a bride and bridegroom. Valere, what ails you? you ſay not a word.

VALERE.

I'm loſt in admiration, madam.——

COUNTESS.

Of my daughter, I ſuppoſe. Well, I don't blame you: an ardent lover——

ANGELICA.

Say nothing to him, madam; he is in an ill humour.

COUNTESS.

You muſt own that my daughter has an infinite deal of wit, mr. Valere. I believe there are very few young women of her age, and perſonal attractions, who have read ſo much.

VALERE.

Will you give me leave to ſpeak my ſentiments freely, madam?

COUNTESS.

Doubtleſs, ſir. He is going to make ſome tender declaration I ſuppoſe. [*Aſide.*]

VALERE.

Why then I cannot ſee what buſineſs a wife has with ſo much knowledge. I muſt own I would rather have one that was entirely ignorant.

COUNTESS.

Ah! what a Scythian in point of taſte! a downright Hun! I would adviſe you, ſir, to ſeek for a wife

wife among thoſe ſuperficial creatures of this city, whoſe only knowledge conſiſts in patching, painting, and dreſſing; ſuch an one would ſuit beſt with your underſtanding.

VALERE.

And be infinitely more agreeable, than one who is perpetually quoting authors. A mere female lexicon!

PASQUIN.

The reaſon is, madam, that my maſter prefers thoſe ladies, whoſe learning lies chiefly among the moderns; whereas, you are for thoſe that are acquainted with the antients. But ſoft; here comes the old gentleman. I'll retire. [*Exit* Paſquin.

SCENE IV.

Enter LISIMON.

LISIMON.

I was told you wanted to ſpeak with me, madam.

COUNTESS.

You was rightly inform'd, ſir.

LISIMON.

Well, then, be as conciſe as poſſible, for I am in haſte.

COUNTESS.

You will let me begin firſt, I hope.

LISIMON.

Begin then, I beg of you; I have an affair upon my hands, that will not permit me to attend to any thing elſe.

COUNTESS.

You are ſo haſty, that I declare there is no ſuch thing as having an eclairciſſement with you. However, I will now come to the point.

LISIMON.

Pray heaven you may keep your word!

COUNTESS.

You know that my cauſe is now coming on.

LISIMON.

Know it! to be ſure I do! Why, have I not been employ'd in feeing your council, ſpeaking to the judge, making friends and——

COUNTESS.

But perhaps you may not know, that the adverſe party have been to my lawyer; and that——

LISIMON.

Zounds, madam! we have no buſineſs, now, with your lawyer, nor the adverſe party neither. I am ſo ſick of your cauſe, and the perpetual din you make about it, that I would, with all my ſoul, pay the whole ſum, to have it determin'd out of hand. However, I think I have taken ſuch meaſures, that it cannot well fail; for I have juſt clapt fifty pieces into the recorder's hand, which, with a few more properly circulated amongſt the underſtrappers, will do the buſineſs, I am perſuaded; and ſo, for heaven's ſake, no more of your cauſe.

COUNTESS.

Well, well, I'm ſatisfied upon that head: But what is to be done with the young folks here? They have now been above three months together in the ſame houſe; and that is long enough, you know, to be acquainted with each other, and, perhaps, too long. Therefore, the whole reſts here: Shall we wait till my cauſe is determin'd? or ſhall we anticipate the ſentence? ſhall we marry the young couple? or ſhall we not?

ANGELICA.

I muſt beg leave to ſay a word.——

LISIMON.

Silence, miſs, if you pleaſe; no one aſks your advice.

VALERE.

In my opinion———

LISIMON.

Your opinion! hold your tongue, till you are aſk'd it. Madam, your cauſe, and this marriage, are two things that have nothing to do with each other. We have ſettled matters to our liking: your daughter is of age, and willing to be married; and delays are dangerous. I want to rid my hands of this libertine; he muſt, therefore, prepare to be marry'd to-morrow; and the more ſo, as I intend to be marry'd myſelf out of hand. Why, you ſtare! I, I myſelf, I ſay, intend to be marry'd out of hand.

VALERE.

You, ſir!

LISIMON.

Yes, I ſir.

VALERE.

But do you conſider———

LISIMON.

I conſider that you are a fool. Get out of the room. Theſe young rake-helly raſcals think, that no-body muſt be marry'd but themſelves.

COUNTESS.

And pray, who is it you are about to marry?

LISIMON.

That is to myſelf, madam; no one elſe has any buſineſs with it. To-morrow is the day I have fixed for the two weddings. Has your ladyſhip any objections?

COUNTESS.

None in the world.

LISIMON.

Nor you, pretty miſs?

ANGELICA.

I am ready to comply with any-thing.

LISIMON.

Obliging creature! Well, then, I think there is nothing further to be ſaid about the matter.

COUNTESS.

I give you a good day.

[*Exeunt* Counteſs *and* Angelica.

LISIMON. [*Seeing* Valere.]

Hey-day! what, are you here ſtill?

VALERE.

Yes, ſir; and muſt beg your permiſſion———

LISIMON.

You have my permiſſion to march about your buſineſs; and ſo troop.——— [*Shoving him out.*]

SCENE V.

LISIMON. *Solus.*

So! now my marriage is declar'd, there is only one little difficulty in the way; and that is, I have not yet got my intended ſpouſe's conſent: no matter, ſhe is in ſome meaſure under my command; and what I am deficient in politeneſs or good figure, I make up in power and authority. However, I want to get her maid over to my ſide, for I know ſhe has a great influence over her miſtreſs; and luckily enough, chance throws her in my way. Here ſhe comes.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

Enter NERINA.

NERINA. [*Aside.*]

So, here's old Testy! but I'll warrant me, I'll give him as good as he brings.

LISIMON.

Good day, Nerina.

NERINA.

Your servant, sir.

LISIMON.

You seem in an ill humour.

NERINA.

We are much alike then, sir.

LISIMON.

You should consider who you are speaking to, child.

NERINA.

And you, in what manner you speak, sir.

LISIMON.

Do you know, mrs. Abigail, that no one in this house dare answer me so, except yourself?

NERINA.

Because no one else has either a grain of courage or resolution.

LISIMON.

Nerina!

NERINA.

Sir!

LISIMON.

This pert air of your's, is by no means agreeable to me.

NERINA.

Nor your morose one to me.

LISIMON.

You know the regard I have ſhewn, both to your miſtreſs and yourſelf.

NERINA.

Yes, ſir, I am not unmindful that you have taken my miſtreſs out of the convent, and brought her home to your own houſe; that you have provided her with mourning for her mother, who is lately dead: but at the ſame time, I conſider, that ſhe has an uncle, who is expected from the Indies, and, at his arrival, will ſatisfy you very handſomely for the expence you have been at; and you know, that where all is paid, nothing is owing.——

LISIMON.

This is not the language of gratitude! Can Julia ever repay what I have done for her? I would have her ſenſible of the obligations ſhe is under to me, and make a ſuitable return.

NERINA.

And what is the return you expect?

LISIMON.

Her affection.

NERINA.

There, ſir, I am afraid you overſhoot the mark: you require impoſſibilities.

LISIMON.

How, mrs. impudence!

NERINA.

Come, come, ſir, lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me ſeriouſly, if you think a ſweet-temper'd young lady, like my miſtreſs, can ever love a teſty, choleric, moroſe old man, who puts himſelf in a fret and a fume about every trifle; drives every-body before him, and is quarrelling from morning till night? No, no, ſir, believe me; the moſt you can expect, is to be fear'd, but never to be lov'd.

LISIMON.

LISIMON. [*Aside.*]

O'my conſcience, ſhe is right. I muſt wheedle her, for I have occaſion for her.—Come, Nerina, let us to the point: Now Julia has loſt her mother, ſhe has no longer any friends to depend upon for a ſupport, except an old uncle that is in the Indies, and at whoſe requeſt I took her home.

NERINA.

I know all that.

LISIMON.

But you do not know, that, by a veſſel lately arrived, he ſent me over full power to marry his niece?

NERINA.

Well; bleſs all good relations ſay I! the honeſt gentleman was not contented with having remitted his niece a handſome ſum of money, but he muſt, at the ſame time, chuſe ſo agreeable a companion for her to ſhare it with! He knew the wants of the ſex, and was willing to anticipate my miſtreſs's deſires, I ſuppoſe; wiſely judging, that at five and twenty years of age, a young woman is no longer in a humour to ſtay for a huſband! Upon my word, mr. Licander is excellently well acquainted with the world.

LISIMON.

Come, come, leave your joking, and ſpeak ſeriouſly: is Julia's heart engag'd?

NERINA.

Doubtleſs it is. Why, do you think a woman can live to her years without being in love? It is about three years ſince, that a young gentleman came to the convent where my miſtreſs was.

LISIMON.

Ah, theſe wild young ſparks thruſt themſelves into every place!

NERINA.

His name was Leander.

LISIMON.

Pox take him, and his name too!

NERINA.

At firſt ſight, they fell violently in love with each other.

LISIMON.

So much the worſe.

NERINA.

They went ſtill farther——

LISIMON.

Zounds! what d'ye mean!

NERINA.

Why, they agreed to be marry'd; but when they were to come to the point, Leander found that miſs Julia had no fortune, and depended only on the bounty of an uncle, who paid her maintenance at the convent; her mother having left Paris, without telling any one where ſhe was gone.

LISIMON.

And was the young man worth money?

NERINA.

Why, I'll tell you, ſir: his whole eſtate, preſent and in reverſion, conſiſted entirely in a large ſtock of love, and fine expreſſions.

LISIMON.

A noble marriage-ſettlement, truly!

NERINA.

When they found this to be the caſe, they mutually agreed to part. Leander took his leave, in the full reſolution to put an end to his life, or to return with a ſufficient fortune to ſupport them both,

and we have not heard a ſyllable from him ſince his departure.

LISIMON.

I am heartily glad of it. He was ſome looſe fortune-hunter, that wanted to ſnap her up.

NERINA.

This gentleman had a footman; as clever a young fellow!——

LISIMON.

As you thought, I ſuppoſe.

NERINA.

Certainly: it is a rule, that a waiting-maid always loves her miſtreſs's lover's man.

LISIMON.

But tell me; has your miſtreſs ſtill a fondneſs for this ſame Leander?

NERINA.

Why, ſir, my miſtreſs is a prodigy; that is to ſay, ſhe is a woman; and conſtant. As for me, I pretend to no ſuch excellence: I found myſelf under a preſſing call; and as it is good to have two ſtrings to one's bow, you know——why—upon one Paſquin's offering his ſervices, I e'en accepted them; and am at preſent his wife.

LISIMON.

Paſquin! what, my ſon's ſervant? Well, you are not much in the wrong; and I hope your miſtreſs will follow your example.

NERINA.

That is as it may happen. But who is the party you propoſe?

LISIMON.

Why, in the firſt place, I muſt tell you, he is not young.

NERINA.

Then to that firſt article, I anſwer, it will never do.

LISIMON.

That we muſt try.——He is a middle-ag'd man; one who has it in his power to make her very happy.

NERINA.

Lord, ſir, I'm in a cold ſweat!

LISIMON.

Why, what ails you?

NERINA

I'm afraid I gueſs at the perſon you mean.

LISIMON.

And does that put you in a cold ſweat?

NERINA.

Upon my life it does; for I am under a deadly apprehenſion that you mean yourſelf.

LISIMON.

Well; it is myſelf: and how then?

NERINA.

How then? why then I no longer wonder at my fright. Something has ſat heavy at my heart all day.

LISIMON.

Huſſy! huſſy! my patience is almoſt exhauſted.

NERINA.

Fair and ſoftly, ſir: here comes my miſtreſs; explain yourſelf to her.

SCENE VII.

Enter JULIA.

LISIMON.

Hark'e, madam; I ſhall make no long harangue about the matter; but ſhall tell you, in three words, that I love you.

JULIA.

Lord! you are quite gallant to-day, ſir! Nerina, do I look well, this morning? how do my things ſit upon me?

NERINA.

Moſt admirably, madam.

LISIMON.

This is always the way with theſe women; they think of nothing but their dreſs and their looks. Come, come, a-done with your idle queſtions; I have ſomething more ſerious to talk to you about.

JULIA.

Oh! none of your ſerious matters, I beſeech you. I rather want ſomething pleaſing to divert my melancholy.

LISIMON.

I deſire you will hear me.

JULIA.

Does my mourning become me, Nerina?

NERINA.

Delightfully! And what do you think of mine?

LISIMON.

I ſhall loſe all patience!

JULIA.

Upon my word, I never ſaw you look ſo handſome.

NERINA.

NERINA.

I am heartily glad of it; for I am ſure, never was mourning worn with a better will. For my part, I always ſpeak what I think; and nothing ever gave me more pleaſure, than the death of your mother; a ſuperannuated old fool, to abandon her daughter to the wide world, when ſhe was only ten years old; to let no creature know whither ſhe was gone; to engage in a ſecond marriage, without conſulting any one; gain an immenſe fortune, and then, inſtead of making you the better for it, to fall in love with a hat and feather, and diſinherit you, to leave him all ſhe had in the world. Oh! there's no end of recounting her follies! In my conſcience, I believe, if the devil has not taken her, it is only thro' fear that ſhe ſhould want him for her fourth huſband.

JULIA.

Peace, dear Nerina; this is a ſubject, you know, that is very diſagreeable to me.

LISIMON.

To be ſure, to be ſure; it will be better to talk of the propoſal I have made you.

NERINA.

Give ear, madam! this worthy gentleman has a number of fine things to ſay to you; he is going to make you the offer of an huſband.

JULIA.

Of an huſband? for heaven's ſake, avoid that, ſir, unleſs you have a mind to make me as ill-natur'd and crabbed as yourſelf.

NERINA.

Lord, madam! you are vaſtly miſtaken; you would be ready to jump out of your ſkin, if you did but know the perſon he has to propoſe to you.

JULIA.

Not the god of love himſelf could ever make me forget my dear Leander, much leſs a mortal.

LISIMON.

Pſha! love is out of the queſtion. When people come to talk of matrimony, there are other conſiderations of greater weight.

JULIA.

I am afraid, ſir, there would be very few marriages, if people took much time to conſider.

LISIMON.

'Sdeath! madam, will you only give me the hearing?

JULIA.

With all my heart, ſir; and ſo, pray make all imaginable diſpatch to let me know your propoſal, that I may be ready with my refuſal.

LISIMON.

Indeed! Oh then, madam, ſince you talk in that ſtrain, I muſt tell you, that you muſt be ready to comply; to comply, madam! I now ſpeak from the authority delegated to me by your uncle, of which, I think, I cannot make a better uſe, than to ſerve myſelf; and therefore, I now declare to you, that myſelf am the perſon I intend for your huſband.

JULIA.

And I, ſir, reply, in virtue of the power delegated to me by reaſon, and my own inclination, that I would ſooner wed my coffin, than marry you.

LISIMON.

Then you ſhall return this very night to the convent. Take your choice: me for a huſband, or a veil for life. I leave you to make your determination, and ſo your ſervant. [*Exit* Liſimon.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

NERINA.

Well, madam, you have certainly a moſt tender and reſpectful lover!

JULIA.

But doſt think he is in earneſt?

NERINA.

I'll anſwer for him. I have already been ſounding him on that head. But how will you determine?

JULIA.

A pretty queſtion; to go back to the convent, to be ſure. It is now a conſiderable time ſince my uncle ſent me word he was coming over from the Indies. When he arrives, he will free me from my confinement.

NERINA.

In my opinion, it will be better to contrive ſome ſcheme for continuing here, and yet not marry this old fellow.

JULIA.

I have a pleaſant one come into my head, only it is not quite ſo honourable.

NERINA.

Let me hear it.

JULIA.

Upon my firſt coming to this houſe, I perceiv'd that Valere had a great paſſion for me.

NERINA.

Ah! you are a little coquette.

JULIA.

No, faith, I am not a coquette; but I love miſchief, if you pleaſe; and I have a mind to revenge myſelf of the father's impertinence, by ſetting him and his ſon together by the ears, who is a young fool, capable of committing all the extravagancies we could wiſh from him. This diſpute

in the family, will keep matters in ſuſpenſe, and give us time to look about us.

NERINA.

An excellent thought! My buſineſs, then, will be, to make Paſquin believe that you have a liking to his maſter.

JULIA.

But be ſure not to diſcover to him the truth.

NERINA.

Oh, let me alone; I know him too well, to truſt him with a ſecret.

JULIA.

Well; but can you bring yourſelf to deceive him?

NERINA.

A mighty piece of buſineſs, indeed! Why, there's nothing ſo natural to a woman, as to cheat her huſband. Do you go back to your chamber, I'll find out Paſquin; and I warrant me, I'll cut out work enough for the old fellow.

JULIA.

But after all, Nerina, we ſhall make a horrible confuſion in the family.

NERINA.

So much the better; I love confuſion of all things. I think there is nothing ſo humdrum, as a family where every one agrees. Theſe little broils give life and ſpirit to the houſe, and ſerve to keep up converſation. Oh! here will be the fineſt ſcene! An amorous old fool, and a young rake, his ſon, his rival! the one, a downright brute; the other, a marplot; and both ſighing for a fair one, who does not care a farthing for either. What excellent ſport ſhall I have! I die, till I am at work! I never ſet about any thing with ſo good a will in my life! But come, we muſt part; you, that way; I, this. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter VALERE *and* PASQUIN.

VALERE,

WELL; now you ſee, Paſquin, whether I had reaſon to be in a paſſion with him! an old dotard! to think of marrying Julia! It cries for vengeance!

PASQUIN.

But after all, what cauſe of complaint have you? Julia was never deſign'd for your wife; and your father's only fault, is having loſt his reaſon.

VALERE.

Oh, by Gad, I have too great a regard to his character, than to ſuffer him to commit ſuch an act of folly and madneſs.

PASQUIN.

What a conſiderate, good-natur'd ſon you are.

VALERE.

However, it gives me no ſmall ſatisfaction, that Julia herſelf has apply'd to me for aſſiſtance. How angry I ſhall make the old man!

PASQUIN.

A very dutiful and laudable reflection!

VALERE.

Look you, Paſquin, I'd brave the devil now, to have Julia.

PASQUIN.

We ſhall ſee if you will brave your father.

VALERE.

By heavens will I! Not that I care a great deal about this girl, only I ſhall have ſo much joy in

croſſing my old dad, who is perpetually growling and grumbling at me, for taking the leaſt innocent amuſement, and he keeps me ſo bare of money, I have long wiſh'd to be reveng'd on him. Now I have found an opportunity; and if I miſs it, hang me.—I will pay as cloſe court to Julia, and endeavour as much to gain her affections, as if I really lov'd her; and if I ſhould not ſucceed after all, it is only returning to Angelica again.

PASQUIN.

And do you know what will be the conſequence of all this? You will make your father half mad.

VALERE.

So much the better.

PASQUIN.

Julia will ſlip thro' your fingers.

VALERE.

I don't care.

PASQUIN.

And Angelica will turn you off.

I'll truſt to that——No, no, Paſquin, when once a woman takes it in her head to have a paſſion for me, it is not ſo eaſily thrown off; beſides, let the worſt happen, I can only remain ſingle, and ſo ſhall be more at liberty.

PASQUIN.

More the libertine, you mean. Why, do you imagine your father ever expected that matrimony would tame you?

VALERE.

If he did, he was plaguily miſtaken: a ſcore of wives ſhould never make me change my way of living. There's no pleaſure under the ſun, like that of doing as one will, and laughing at what the world ſays. I cannot conceive, how a man of ſpirit can be a ſlave to that bugbear, reputation.

Thank

Thank heaven, I have had friends who have cur'd me of ſuch idle notions.

PASQUIN.

Yes, yes, you have had excellent tutors, and do them great honour, I'll ſay that for you; but let me tell you, if you perſiſt in the deſign of marrying Julia, you'll find that your father is not the only one you will have to deal with; you will raiſe a devil that will not be ſo eaſily laid.

VALERE.

Who do you mean?

PASQUIN.

The counteſs, who, if the annals of ſcandal in the place where ſhe reſides, lye not, has had the honour, ſome ſcore of times in her life, to beſtow a ſound drubbing on her thrice-honour'd lord and huſband, the late count de la Pépiniere.

VALERE.

Yes; but I ſhall not be quite ſo paſſive as his lordſhip. I ſhall ſoon clear my hands of her.

PASQUIN.

I'm glad to hear it. Now, then, is the time to ſhew your proweſs: for lo! where her ladyſhip appears, ready to enter the liſt, and run a tilt with you.

SCENE II.

Enter COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

So, ſir! what are you doing here, pray? How comes it you are thus wanting in your attendance on my daughter? do you expect her to come in ſearch of you?

VALERE.

VALERE.

Your ladyſhip will pleaſe to remember, that you forbid me holding any private converſation with miſs Angelica.

COUNTESS.

But am I not always with her, ſir?

VALERE.

I was afraid you might have been abroad, madam.

COUNTESS.

You are become mighty circumſpect of late. It is no wonder my daughter is in ſuch diſtreſs. I was not willing to countenance the poor child's ſuſpicions; but I perceive they were too well founded.

VALERE.

What does your ladyſhip mean?

COUNTESS.

Come, come, ſir, none of your evaſions, your ſubterfuges! Your neglect of my daughter is but too apparent: ſurely you have forgot of whom ſhe is deſcended! Mercy o'me! was her great great grandfather's grandfather, count Bertrand, living, he would teach you the reſpect due to the family of the Pépiniere's!

VALERE.

'Sdeath! madam, who do you take me for? an Oroondates? or an Amadis de Gaul? What in the name of fortune would miſs Angelica have? I'm ſure I have been in love with her above theſe two months.

COUNTESS.

Mighty well, my pert ſir. I find you grow weary of being in poſſeſſion of a happineſs a thouſand times above your deſert.

VALERE.

Why, look you my lady counteſs, I do not know

know that I am under any articles to ſigh for your daughter my whole life: beſides, not all the powers on earth ſhould oblige me to love any one unleſs I had an inclination ſo to do.

PASQUIN.

Not if there were-a ſcore of count Bertrands in the family——

COUNTESS.

So then, ſir, you abſolutely will not love my daughter?

VALERE.

I am not poſitive as to that. Time brings many things about:—but at preſent, I confeſs I find no diſpoſition to it.

PASQUIN.

There muſt be a time for every thing.

COUNTESS.

Was ever ſuch inſolence! And ſo you really will not marry Angelica?

PASQUIN.

You hear, madam, my maſter is not poſitive.

COUNTESS.

Did he not ſay this inſtant he did not love her?

PASQUIN.

Love her! that's no reaſon he may not marry her. What has love to do with marriage? People now-a-days generally chuſe to marry thoſe they do not love.

COUNTESS.

I confeſs this maxim is quite new to me. In the noble and antient families of our province, love and marriage always go together.

PASQUIN.

To ſee now how places differ! I can aſſure your ladyſhip that it's upwards of two centuries ſince theſe

theſe two have been ſeen together in my maſter's family.

COUNTESS.

Immortal powers! when he is my ſon-in-law I ſhall make him change his method. I am determined that whoſoever marries my daughter, ſhall adore her.

VALERE.

Will your ladyſhip give me leave to tell you my ſentiments without diſguiſe? If you can find a perſon that you think a more ſuitable huſband for miſs Angelica, I adviſe you to give him the preference.

PASQUIN.

The whole bench of judges could not have giv'n better advice.

COUNTESS.

Very well! from hence I ſuppoſe I am to infer that you will break your word whenever you think proper. This, I preſume, is another cuſtom handed down to you from your anceſtors.

PASQUIN.

Your ladyſhip has hit the right nail on the head.

COUNTESS.

A very noble prerogative undoubtedly! now I ſhall exactly follow the cuſtom of all my predeceſſors in the like caſe.

VALERE.

Which is———

COUNTESS.

I'll explain it to you in three words. When any one promiſes marriage to a young lady of our family, and the affair has got wind, we never diſpenſe with the obſervance of that promiſe. Not that we oblige any one to act contrary to their inclinations; no, no, no; on the contrary, if a lover is daring

daring enough to offer us an affront of that kind, we never make him any reproaches, but content ourſelves with obſerving a trifling ceremony upon the occaſion.

PASQUIN.

And pray, madam, what may that be?

COUNTESS.

Why, if the father of the young lady who has received the affront is living, he inſtantly whips his ſword thro' the gentleman's body: if ſhe has only a mother alive, then the neareſt male relation puts a piſtol in his pocket, goes in ſearch of the inconſtant, and blows his brains out. Now you, my good ſir, are the inconſtant in the preſent caſe. The count de la Pépiniere is not living, but Angelica has a couſin in town——you underſtand me——

VALERE.

Curſe catch me, if I can help laughing at the drollery of your ladyſhip's menace. Ha! ha! ha!

PASQUIN.

Nor I upon my ſoul, it is ſo highly ridiculous. Ha! ha! ha!

COUNTESS. [*Striking* Paſquin.]

There raſcal! take that; to teach you how to behave to a perſon of my rank.—As for you, ſir, [*To* Valere] fix your determination, and let me know it out of hand;—otherwiſe you have not another hour to live, and ſo your ſervant.

[*Exit* Counteſs *in a rage.*

SCENE III.

PASQUIN.

So! war's declared in form; but the firſt acts of hoſtility have been committed on my territories, which is rather unjuſt, as I was only an auxiliary.

VALERE.

VALERE.

The good lady is ſomewhat ſprightly.

PASQUIN.

Yes, faith! my ears can bear teſtimony to that. It would have been ſome comfort to me under my ſufferings, if ſhe had given you your ſhare.

VALERE.

Egad I expected it.

PASQUIN.

A very extraordinary character of a woman this!

VALERE.

I cannot get rid of my ſurprize.

PASQUIN.

I'll anſwer for it ſhe made you tremble.

VALERE.

Not in the leaſt; I am more afraid of the attack I have to make on the old man.

PASQUIN.

He'll play the very devil when he finds you are off with Angelica, and want to get Julia from him. Zounds! how will you break it to him? it will be a dangerous attempt.

VALERE.

My dear Paſquin, if thou would'ſt but ſtand the firſt broadſide for me——

PASQUIN.

A very curious propoſal upon my word! not contented with the blows I have received from the counteſs on your account, you want to attack your father at the expence of my hide; I am obliged to you; I have no paſſion for being made a forlorn-hope. But by all that's good here he comes!

VALERE.

VALERE.

I'll leave you and him together, and return after his firſt fire is a little ſpent.

SCENE IV.

Enter LISIMON.

[*Who ſeing* Valere *going out, ſtops him.*]

LISIMON.

Oh! you are the perſon I want; ſtay here, ſir.!

PASQUIN.

I may leave the room I preſume, ſir?

LISIMON.

No, raſcal!

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

What the devil buſineſs had I here?

VALERE.

What is your will with me, ſir?

LISIMON.

I have heard a fine account of you truly! What, muſt I eternally be put to the bluſh on your account? Are theſe the fruits of the education I have been at the pains to give you? Go! abandoned wretch! from this day forward I ſhall forget you are my ſon.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

This opening promiſes ſomething mighty comfortable.

VALERE.

You have taken care that I ſhall never forget you are my father, ſir.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide to* Valere.]

Bravo! keep up your ſpirits! to him again!

LISIMON.

What is it you are whiſpering to him?

PASQUIN.

I was telling my maſter I thought him very much to blame, ſir.

LISIMON.

Stand on this ſide, ſirrah! [*To* Valere.] And ſo it ſeems you are determined to bring a diſgrace upon me and your family, by baſely falſifying your vows to Angelica?

VALERE.

I ſuppoſe the old counteſs has been with you. What a noiſe is here about nothing, indeed!

LISIMON.

Have you the aſſurance to make ſo light of an affair of this nature? When I was a young man, had any one acted as you have done, he muſt have hid his face for ever.

PASQUIN.

Oh! but the world is greatly changed my dear ſir; we ſhould not whip a page for ſuch a thing now-a-days.

VALERE.

True, Paſquin.

LISIMON.

A word with you, Mr. Paſquin.

PASQUIN.

Sir!

[*He endeavours to ſteal out, and* Liſimon *catches hold of him.*]

LISIMON.

Stay, ſtay, ſir! I have not done with you yet: —upon my word I am extremely happy that my ſon's conduct happens to pleaſe you, and that you approve of his honourable ſentiments; I did believe you

you would. You deſerve a reward for your juſt diſcernment, and ſhall not be long before you receive it.

PASQUIN.

You are extremely kind, ſir; but I have no ſelf-intereſted views, I aſſure you:—I had rather retire, ſir, if you pleaſe, than put you to any expence.

LISIMON.

Oh! what I have to give you will coſt me little or nothing; only a few baſtinadoes, Mr. Paſquin; nothing more.

PASQUIN. [*Struggling.*]

Sir! upon my ſoul, ſir; I beg to be excuſed——

LISIMON.

You ſhall not eſcape me, mr. raſcal! Valere, call ſome of my ſervants.

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere.]

Zounds! ſir, you will not offer——

LISIMON.

Do as I order you.

VALERE.

How, ſir! do you think I will be acceſſary to the ill treatment of a poor fellow, whoſe only crime is his attachment to me?

LISIMON.

For which he deſerves to be beat to death. I know, I know that this raſcal ſpoils you.

PASQUIN.

Me, ſir? as I hope to be ſaved if he was ſpoilt when you put him into my hands, ſuch as I found him, I am ready to return him.

LISIMON.

Why, you are diſpoſed to be waggiſh, hey?

PASQUIN.

Not I, upon my ſoul, ſir! I have never had any inclination to be waggiſh ſince I have been married. But in ſhort I am quite tired of being the victim of another's folly: and ſo, ſir, if you'll but ſpare my ſhoulders, I'll e'en diſcover to you the real cauſe of all my maſter's wrong proceedings.

VALERE. [*To* Paſquin *aſide.*]

'Sdeath villain! will you betray me?

PASQUIN. [*Aloud.*]

I'll tell the truth, ſir. Fear nothing. [*Aſide.*]

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

What can he be going to ſay?

LISIMON.

Come, mr. impudence, let me hear how you'll extricate yourſelf?

PASQUIN.

Firſt then, ſir, I uſed to deſire my maſter, time after time, to take care what he did; this way of going on, ſays I, will exaſperate your father to the higheſt degree. What care I? ſays he; do you imagine that I'm ſuch a fool to be curbed by him? why my father was guilty of as many follies as me when he was as young; and ſo, I think, it is but fair he ſhould wink at what I do, in return for my not mentioning what he has formerly done.

LISIMON.

You ſaid this, did you?——

VALERE.

Me, ſir? if I know a ſyllable——

PASQUIN.

Oh lord! ſir, this is nothing to what I could tell you.

VALERE.

Sure, ſir, you will not give ear to the villain.

PASQUIN.

I think you are very bold to interrupt me in your father's preſence.—Ay, ay, you may make as many ſigns as you pleaſe, but I ſhall ſet you in your true light.

VALERE.

Was there ever ſuch villainy! father! ſir! I'll call in your ſervants.

LISIMON.

No, no; I have no occaſion for them now; go on my lad.

VALERE.

Then I'll leave the room.

LISIMON.

I command you to remain here.

PASQUIN.

I am ſorry to ſay, ſir, mr. Valere's extravagant, rakiſh, idle way of life is his leaſt fault. Look at him; examine him cloſely, I do ſay and declare it, that his principles are not a whit better than his underſtanding.

VALERE.

I can hear no more! let me get at the raſcal; I'll break every bone in his ſkin.

LISIMON.

Stir a foot farther; and——I find he is an honeſt lad, and I take him under my protection.

PASQUIN.

Ah! ſir, you had a diſlike to me only for want of knowing me better.

LISIMON.

I believe it—but to the point again.

PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

Well, ſir, this young gentleman, (would you think it?) has had the aſſurance to tell me, who now ſtand before you, that all the difference between you and him was, that he openly and honeſtly diſplayed his follies; whereas you concealed yours under the ſpecious cloak of gravity and wiſdom.

LISIMON.

Inſolent monſter!——

VALERE.

Mercy on us! do you believe what he ſays?

LISIMON.

Every tittle of it; for I know you are capable of this, and worſe. But pray, mr. impudence, what are theſe follies I ſo artfully conceal?

PASQUIN.

Oh! I'll tell you for him, ſir. I wonder my father is not aſhamed! (I uſe his own words) Is not my father aſhamed, he would ſay, to reproach me with the little ſallies of youth, when at the ſame time I know he is on the point of making himſelf ridiculous for ever by a ſecond marriage? Yes, yes, the world will ſoon be undeceiv'd with regard to his prudence! He has been ten years a widower, and it is not half a year ſince I ſaw him lamenting the loſs of my mother, with tears; and telling us, in a mournful accent, how good a wife ſhe had been; and that, if ever we ſaw him marry again, we might take it for granted he had loſt his ſenſes. Now, ſir, can it be poſſible that you ever talked in this manner?

LISIMON.

That's no buſineſs of yours; go on with your ſtory.

PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

Nay, ſir, aſk your ſon the reſt; he'll tell it you better than I can.

LISIMON. [*To* Valere.]

Will your worſhip be pleas'd to break ſilence?

PASQUIN. [*Making ſigns to* Valere.]

Speak, ſir, ſpeak.

VALERE.

Speak yourſelf, and be damn'd. I begin to underſtand him. 'Tis an excellent turn. [*Aſide.*]

LISIMON.

He did not ſtop there, I ſuppoſe?

PASQUIN.

Lord bleſs you ſir! ſtop there! no, no. However, I ſchool'd him finely about it—I got a good drubbing for my pains, indeed; but I did not care, I told him his own: for, tho' I'm only a poor ſervant, as you ſee, ſir, yet I know what it is to be a father, and to have children to bring up. I'cod, if mine were to turn out rakes and libertines, I know what I know——

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

What an arch counterfeit!

LISIMON.

But what did he ſay afterwards about this marriage?

PASQUIN.

Nothing. But I found out what ſet him ſo mightily agog.

LISIMON.

And what was it?

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

Now he comes to the point, I'm all in a ſweat.

PASQUIN.

Why, nothing more nor leſs, ſir, than this; he is in love with miſs Julia.

LISIMON.

In love with Julia! [*To* Valere.] Why, you abominable, impudent, audacious——

PASQUIN.

Nay, dear ſir, moderate your paſſion: if your ſon has a love for the lady, you are in ſome meaſure the cauſe of it.

LISIMON.

I the cauſe of it!

PASQUIN.

Yes, ſir; and I'll tell you how. You were always ſaying, that miſs Angelica had the air of a country dowdy; that her affectation of learning was ridiculous, and ſo forth. Now, mr. Valere thought the ſame. On the other hand, you always prais'd miſs Julia, as a young lady of infinite wit and beauty; and was continually extolling her ſprightlineſs and agreeable vivacity. Miſs Julia's merit has made an impreſſion on your heart; it has done the ſame on your ſon's. You are deſirous of making her your wife; he wiſhes to paſs the remainder of his life with her: and ſo you plainly ſee, if he is guilty of a folly in this, it is only by copying your example.

VALERE. [*Squeezing* Paſquin's *hand.*]

My dear rogue! how much I am oblig'd to you!

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

Peace! marplot!

LISIMON.

What does he ſay?

PASQUIN.

He was desiring me, sir, to make a trifling proposal to you, in his name.

LISIMON.

What is it?

PASQUIN.

Why, sir, that you would agree to an exchange. He is ready to give you miss Angelica, if you will yield up Julia to him.

LISIMON.

Oh! I understand you, scoundrels! you are in concert to impose upon me, I find.

VALERE.

We are no otherwise in concert, sir, than that I desir'd him to tell you, that the respect I had for you, would not suffer me to declare myself.

LISIMON.

Mighty well! As for you, sir, I shall send you abroad immediately. [*To* Valere.] And you, rascal! [*To* Pasquin.] where are you going?

PASQUIN.

To pack up his things, sir. [*Runs off.*]

VALERE.

We'll try which of us two shall have Julia.

LISIMON.

Audacious villain! if I lay hold of thee!

[*Runs at him with his cane.*]

SCENE V.

Enter ANGELICA. [*Who runs between them.*]

ANGELICA.

Good heavens! what do I see?

LISIMON.

Oh, madam! my ſon; my raſcal of a ſon——

ANGELICA.

Sir, I cannot bear to ſee you treat him in this manner.

LISIMON.

I am aſham'd to tell you! but this wretch——

ANGELICA.

You ſhock me, ſir, with theſe epithets!

LISIMON.

If you knew to what a height of impudence——

ANGELICA.

I cannot liſten to you, ſir, while you ſpeak of your ſon in ſuch injurious terms. You ought to ſhew more deference to a perſon on whom I have placed my affections: And, let me tell you, no gentleman———

LISIMON.

Truce with your high flights, if you pleaſe. Death and furies! I tell you———

ANGELICA.

Was there ever ſo paſſionate a man? Your fury tranſports you beyond the bounds of decency. Indeed, indeed, mr. Liſimon, you forget yourſelf. The maſter of a family ought to preſerve a becoming decorum, and conſider the ſtation he holds in life.

LISIMON.

Conſider a fig's end! Is this a time to preach? 'Sblood! will you hear me, or not?

ANGELICA.

I am ready to hear you, provided you will ſpeak of this gentleman in a decent manner.

LISIMON.

Well, be it ſo. Then I tell you, this ſcoundrel——

ANGELICA.

Why, this is worſe than all the reſt.

VALERE.

I'll explain the whole affair to you, madam, in two words. My father, here, wants to marry Julia. Do you think I ought to ſuffer ſuch a thing? ſpeak, madam.

ANGELICA.

To marry Julia! Indeed, mr. Liſimon, I thought you had been more prudent; and, with all due reſpect, muſt take the liberty of ſaying, that ſuch an intention ſhews a total depravity of ſenſe and underſtanding.

LISIMON.

And I muſt tell your heroical ladyſhip, in anſwer to that, and with all due reſpect to your loftineſs, that your ridiculous high flights diſtract me more, if poſſible, than that raſcal's impertinence! Do you know, he has had the impudence to aſk Julia in marriage of me?

ANGELICA.

For ſome friend of his, I preſume.

LISIMON.

Some friend of his? no! for himſelf.

ANGELICA.

You certainly wrong him: he is not capable of ſuch perfidy.

LISIMON.

The thing is as I tell you.

ANGELICA.

I can never believe it.

LISIMON.

Zounds! I'm upon a gridiron! Speak! you villain, ſpeak! Is it not true, that you no longer love this lady? Is it not true, that you have declar'd a paſſion for Julia? Is it not true, that you want to marry her? Is——

VALERE.

Hold, ſir! I muſt beg to be excus'd: I never ſaid any ſuch thing.

ANGELICA.

I was certain of it.

LISIMON.

You abominable varlet! do you deny——

VALERE.

I did indeed ſay that, if you had an inclination to a ſecond wife, this lady was a more ſuitable match for you than Julia.

ANGELICA.

Me! me a ſuitable match for your father?

VALERE.

Undoubtedly! You have all that underſtanding, modeſty, virtue, and prudence, that would——

ANGELICA. [*To* Valere.]

Enough ſir! I underſtand you. [*To* Liſimon.] I am now convinc'd, ſir, that what has been told me is but too true: and, tho' I can challenge my whole ſex to love with more ardour and ſincerity than I do this faithleſs perjur'd man; yet my paſſion ſhall never ſo far get the better of me, as to make me run after a perſon who ſlights me. I now releaſe him from all his engagements; and ſhall endeavour, by abſence, to wean myſelf of a miſplac'd tenderneſs, and repay his indifference with all the ſcorn it merits. [*Exit* Angelica.]

SCENE

SCENE VI.

LISIMON.

Nobly expreſs'd! by heaven I applaud her for treating you with the contempt you deſerve!

VALERE.

Well, ſir, as you ſee ſhe is ſo ready to deſpiſe me, the change in my affections cannot give her much uneaſineſs. She has releaſed you from your engagements as well as me, and now we have got over the greateſt obſtacle, for I am ſure you have too much good ſenſe to think of falling in love at your time of life. Let me entreat you, therefore, to make one ſlight effort to render your ſon happy for life: yield me Julia.

LISIMON.

'Sblood! would you have me force her inclination?

VALERE.

There will be no occaſion to uſe force in the matter, ſir.

LISIMON.

Son of mine, you're a great coxcomb! I know her affections are plac'd elſewhere.

VALERE.

And I know ſhe has a liking to me, tho' ſhe has hitherto conceal'd it, for fear of diſpleaſing you, and making me break my engagements with Angelica: but, if you appear the leaſt inclin'd to conſent to our union, I am certain ſhe would not heſitate an inſtant to give me her hand.

LISIMOND.

Mighty well! Here ſhe comes. I ſhall deſire her to explain herſelf; and then you will be convinc'd what a vain puppy you are.

SCENE VII.

Enter JULIA *and* NERINA.

LISIMON.

Madam, you are come in a lucky moment

JULIA.

Bleſs me, gentlemen! what is the matter? you ſeem both of you in a ſtrange heat!

LISIMON.

Heat, quotha! How can there be any peace in a family where there is a handſome young woman? Do you know, madam, you have been the occaſion of my ſon's behaving in a very diſreſpectful manner to me?

VALERE.

But ſurely, in ſo fair a cauſe, ſome excuſe may be pleaded.

JULIA. [*Aſide to* Nerina.]

They have been together by the ears, Nerina. We ſhall gain time now.

LISIMON.

You know, madam, I deſign to make you my wife; and that I have propoſed it to you.

JULIA.

I do, ſir; greatly to my honour, and little to my ſatisfaction.

VALERE [*Aſide.*]

Admirably anſwer'd!

LISIMON.

A little more complaiſance would become you better, miſs.

NERINA.

Lord, ſir! would you have my young lady ſay ſhe loves you? That might be civil, perhaps, but I am ſure it would not be true.

LISIMON.

What buſineſs have you to interfere, mrs. pert? I know you endeavour to give her an averſion to me.

JULIA.

Indeed, ſir, you wrong her much: I have it naturally.

VALERE. [*Aſide.*]

Bravo!

NERINA.

You find, ſir, my lady ſpeaks plain: theſe are the pure dictates of nature. You happen to be by no means agreeable to her: and ſhe is very certain, that if you was to oblige her, out of complaiſance, to become your wife, ſhe ſhould be miſerable for the reſt of her days. Now, can it be me who inſpires her with theſe ſentiments?

LISIMON.

Who elſe?

NERINA.

Why, nature ſir, nature. My lady looks at you and your ſon; ſhe ſees in you the venerable father of a family; in him, one who may be ſo: ſhe is ſenſible your beſt days are paſt; and that he is only entering into his: with you, ſhe can expect to paſs only diſagreeable moments; with him, pleaſing ones. Now, am I the cauſe of all this?

LISIMON.

The baggage will ſay this is nature too.

NERINA.

Undoubtedly it is! and, when ſhe ſpeaks, we muſt obey. Oh, you can't conceive, ſir, what a

prodigious influence ſhe has upon young women of my lady's age. I know what it is; I have felt it.

LISIMON.

Why then, if I may believe what I hear, madam, my ſon has told me nothing more than the truth. And you are really mad enough to have a paſſion for him?

JULIA.

I do not ſay that, ſir; but, if the great fortune I expect from my uncle tempts you to be deſirous of keeping it in your family, I muſt confeſs, I would rather ſhare it with him than you.

NERINA.

Well, now here nature ſpeaks again. Can you ſay ſhe is wrong?

LISIMON.

Yes, I can. Heark'e, madam, I know how to puniſh you for this inſult you have offer'd me; and ſhall find a way to make you repent your fooliſh choice.

JULIA.

Pray, what puniſhment may you intend to inflict upon me?

LISIMON.

A more ſevere one than you may imagine; I condemn you to become the wife of this ſpark [*Pointing to* Valere.] To-morrow you ſhall be marry'd to him: for I muſt acquaint you that your uncle has given me authority ſo to diſpoſe of you, if I thought proper.

JULIA. [*To* Nerina.]

Then I'm undone!

VALERE.

What a happy dog am I

NERINA.

Lord bleſs me! can't you ſee that mr. Liſimon is only jeſting with you all this time?

JULIA.

Indeed I might have reflected, that he is not a perſon of ſo compliable a diſpoſition.

LISIMON.

I mean what I ſay. I can ſee into your ſcheme better than you think for. You only want to make dupes of us both, in order to gain time. But, mark well what I ſay; you have only two things to chuſe, to be either my wife or daughter-in-law, to-morrow; and ſo, I leave you to your meditations. [*Exit* Liſimon.]

SCENE VIII.

VALERE.

Well, now, my lovely Julia, I may look upon myſelf as ſure of you: for I can hardly think you will heſitate an inſtant between my father and me. Upon my ſoul I ſhould never have ſuſpected the old gentleman of being ſo reaſonable.

JULIA. [*To* Nerina.]

Ah, Nerina! into what a dilemma have I brought myſelf!

NERINA.

Faith, madam, ſince what is done cannot be recalled, we muſt e'en make the beſt of a bad market.

JULIA.

By my imprudence, I have reduc'd myſelf to der the cruel neceſſity of marrying Valere, or——

NERINA.

A great misfortune, truly! I wiſh I was under ſame neceſſity.

JULIA.

I am determin'd to do neither.

VALERE.

Methinks you have a long conſultation together. Is there any thing very difficult in making choice of the father or the ſon? I have too good an opinion of your delicacy and good ſenſe, to think you would affront me ſo far as to deliberate a moment.

JULIA.

Well, ſir, then I am ready to give you my hand, provided you can prevail on the counteſs and her daughter to releaſe you from your promiſe to them, and to come in perſon to me and declare their conſent to our marriage. Without that, hope not for mine. I would ſuffer every kind of perſecution, rather than give my hand to a man I do not love, and who is under engagements to another woman. Farewell. [*Exit* Julia.]

SCENE IX.

VALERE.

By heaven I'll not be fobb'd off ſo! I'll marry her in ſpite of her teeth; if it is only to vex her, as well as my old dad. But, heark'e, Nerina, can you tell me how it comes about your miſtreſs does not love me?

NERINA.

Oh, very eaſily! it is becauſe ſhe loves another.

VALERE.

Another! who is he?

NERINA.

I'll draw you his picture in a ſecond: he is as pretty a fellow as——

VALERE.

Do you know where he is?

NERINA.

No faith; I wiſh we did—The traitor to abandon us in this manner! In my conſcience, all your pretty fellows are great rogues.

VALERE.

My dear Nerina, I muſt engage you in my intereſt; and get you to prevail upon your miſtreſs, not to inſiſt upon my obtaining the conſent of the counteſs and her daughter to our marriage.

NERINA.

I am ſure my miſtreſs will do nothing without that: and beſides, I muſt tell you, that I am in your rival's intereſt.

VALERE.

Here, Nerina, take this purſe; there are thirty pieces: let thoſe prevail on thee to grant me the favour I requeſt.

SCENE X.

Enter PASQUIN. [*Who ſeeing* Valere *give* Nerina *the purſe, ſtands to liſten.*]

NERINA.

I profeſs, ſir, you make me bluſh; but you ſhake my conſtancy terribly.

VALERE.

If that is not ſufficient to move thee, I'll give thee any thing thou can'ſt deſire. Come, my dear girl, conſent to make me happy.

[*Catches her in his arms.*]

PASQUIN. [*Comes forward, and places himſelf between them.*]

Ha! ha! have I caught you, maſter of mine?

NERINA.

NERINA.

What does the blockhead mean?

PASQUIN.

What do I mean, traitoreſs? Body o'me! what keeps me from twiſting that jilt's neck of yours! So, you was juſt upon the point of ſurrendring! Did not I overhear the articles of capitulation? Ah, thou baſe ſtrumpet! ſo eaſily to give up the fortreſs of my honour!

VALERE.

Are you mad, Paſquin?

PASQUIN.

Are you mad, if you pleaſe? Zounds, ſir! tho' you are my maſter, you have no right to my wife. I underſtand no jokes upon that head.

NERINA.

Indeed, my good huſband, you are a great fool.

PASQUIN.

Ay, and I might have been ſomething worſe, if I had not come in the god-ſpeed; for you was ſetting my forehead up to auction, mrs. Jeſebel, and it was going for thirty pieces.

VALERE.

Do you know, mr. Paſquin, that I am in no humour for jeſting?

PASQUIN.

Nor am I, ſir, in a humour to liſt in the horned fraternity: neither would I ſuffer theſe doings if you was my father! Come, come, I know you: you would not give my wife thirty pieces for an old ſong———My dear Nerina, let this prevail on thee to grant the favour I requeſt. Lord, ſir! you make me bluſh! you ſhake my conſtancy terribly. Theſe were the laſt ſtruggles of conjugal fidelity, ha? Ah! huſſy, huſſy!

VALERE.

VALERE.

I am really ſorry for your folly, Paſquin: 'tis true I was aſking a favour of her; but it was to ſpeak a good word for me to her miſtreſs.

NERINA.

Now, there's all the mighty affair, you block-head! but thou art always upon a wrong ſcent.

PASQUIN.

Well, well, give me the money, and I ſhall believe I was in the wrong.

NERINA.

There! take it, if that will quiet thee.

PASQUIN. [*Putting the money in his pocket.*]

So. I am a gainer one way, however; and I have this comfort, that I am not the only huſband who has pocketted an affront of this kind.

VALERE.

And now, Nerina, go and ſpeak to thy miſtreſs.

NERINA.

I will; aud do you, in the mean time, endeavour to bring over the counteſs and Angelica.

VALERE.

I'll ſet about it inſtantly. Adieu.

NERINA.

Away; and I'll to my lady.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*]

PASQUIN.

And I'll watch you both, to ſee that you do not play me a ſlippery trick. [*Exit.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

JULIA *and* NERINA.

NERINA.

I TELL you, I am in the right; and you will be in the wrong, if you don't follow my advice.

JULIA.

Your ſentiments are ſtrangely alter'd, I think, within this hour. Nobody could ſpeak more againſt Valere, than you did; and now you want to perſuade me to marry him.

NERINA.

Becauſe I am weary of ſeeing you lay yourſelf under ſuch reſtraint upon account of a faithleſs wretch, that, in all probability, ſeldom, if ever, thinks about you. No condition is ſo diſagreeable as that of an unmarried woman. You have been a maid theſe five and twenty years; ſix of them much againſt your inclination: The interval from five and twenty to thirty, is very ſhort; and a woman arrives at forty, before ſhe knows where ſhe is. The ſolitude in which ſhe then finds herſelf, proves to her but too clearly, that her day is paſt, and ſhe is ready to hang herſelf for having made no better uſe of it. Every-thing now tells her, that ſhe is in the autumn of her life; that dreary ſeaſon which bears no fruit, and is the fore-runner of a ſtill more dreary winter, that never will bear any.

JULIA.

Upon my word, I never knew you was miſtreſs of ſo much eloquence! why, here's an oration in all its forms!

NERINA.

Take care it does not prove the funeral one of your charms.

JULIA.

My charms, Nerina, are few and weak; and I am ſenſible that they are every day loſing what little power they might once have; but I had much rather never be married, than wed a man I do not love.

NERINA.

Ah, if you knew what it was to be a maid all one's life!

JULIA.

A great misfortune, truly! I ſuppoſe you look upon a huſband as a precious acquiſition. Come, come, I'm no ſuch novice; I know what the generality of huſbands are: A huſband is a man, who loves you only ſo long as your independent of him; and the inſtant you are in his power, honours you with his indifference. If (by next kin to a miracle) his love ſhould continue after marriage, he then becomes the rigid cenſor of your every word and action, and the controuler of all your pleaſures. Is not matrimony a very deſirable ſtate, think you, in which you are ſure to be either deſpiſed or ill treated?

NERINA.

Finely flouriſh'd, indeed! but notwithſtanding this curious declamation againſt matrimony, you are willing to venture on it with Leander.

JULIA.

True, becauſe I have a ſincere affection for him; and it is neceſſary that a young woman ſhould have a huſband.

a huſband. Beſides, I am fully perſuaded that I ſhall be happier with him, than with any other perſon.

NERINA.

Lord preſerve us! never truſt to that; take my word for it, huſbands are all alike. But even ſuppoſing they were not ſo, I ſee no proſpect of your being happy with Leander; he does not make his appearance, and, in my opinion, never will again: ſo that after all your fine imaginations, you will die an old maid, ſay I told you ſo.

JULIA.

Well, I ſhall die my own miſtreſs, however.

NERINA.

How ſo? have you not given your promiſe to Valere?

JULIA.

Yes, on condition he obtains the counteſs's conſent, which, from my knowledge of her, I am ſure he will never be able to do; and ſo there will be time for Leander to return, before any thing can be determin'd.

NERINA.

The evaſion is excellent! But who knows if mr. Liſimon will approve of it? I doubt he will be in a terrible rage, when he finds——But here he comes; we ſhall have a fine piece of work!

SCENE II.

Enter LISIMON.

LISIMON.

Madam, I am come to return you my thanks.

NERINA. [*Aſide.*]

He's wonderfully ſoften'd, methinks.

JULIA.

For what, pray ſir?

LISIMON.

For refuſing to marry my ſon, madam, unleſs he obtains the counteſs's conſent. This is ſome ſatisfaction to me for the ſlight you have ſhewn me; for I know, that her ladyſhip would think herſelf for ever diſhonour'd, if Valere did not marry her daughter; and I am ſure, whatever ſubject of diſpleaſure he may have given her, ſhe'll never leave this roof, till he is her ſon-in-law; and in the main, I think ſhe has reaſon on her ſide; for the affair has made a noiſe in the world, and everybody of her acquaintance in the country have ſent her up their compliments upon it.

JULIA.

From all this, ſir, I am to gather, that you would be very glad I did not marry your ſon.

LISIMON.

Undoubtedly; and I only conſented to it out of pique, becauſe you ſeem'd to deſire it. The obſtacle which you have ſo judiciouſly thrown in the way, will clear us both. But here is the counteſs and her daughter, who, doubtleſs, come to upbraid me with favouring your union with my ſon; but the more noiſe and buſtle ſhe makes about it, the better opportunity ſhe will give me of recalling my promiſe, and obliging my ſon to return again to Angelica.

SCENE III.

Enter COUNTESS *and* ANGELICA.

COUNTESS.

Come, daughter, let us ſhew theſe people who they have to deal with.

NERINA. [*To* Liſimon, *aſide.*]

You will have your deſire, ſir; her ladyſhip ſeems ready to boil over.

ANGELICA.

Convince them, madam———

COUNTESS.

Truſt to me. [*To* Nerina.] What are you doing here, miſtreſs? I deſire you'll leave the room immediately.

JULIA.

By what right, pray, does your ladyſhip take upon you to command my ſervant?

COUNTESS.

By the right, child, that women of my condition have to command wherever they come.

LISIMON.

This is my houſe, madam; and I inſiſt that Nerina ſhall ſtay where ſhe is; and what has your ladyſhip to ſay to that?

COUNTESS.

Nothing; but that you are a poor, ſilly, weak man, and ſuffer yourſelf to be led by the noſe like a fool.

ANGELICA.

I intreat you, madam, to be calm, and come to the point.

COUNTESS.

I intend it. But I muſt tell you, daughter, that you are a pitiful, mean-ſpirited creature too!

JULIA.

How can your ladyſhip treat ſo amiable a young lady in this manner?

COUNTESS.

That is no buſineſs of your's, miſs. If ſhe was like you, I'd twiſt her neck round.

JULIA.

JULIA.

I desire, madam, you will please to be careful of what you say.

LISIMON.

Heark'e, my lady countess, I shall lose all patience, presently.

COUNTESS.

Do so, sir, do so; it is what I wish! it will then be seen who has the least of us two.

ANGELICA.

Dear madam, have you not promis'd me that you would keep your temper?

COUNTESS.

Keep my temper! and so I do, I think, to a miracle! I am amaz'd at my own coolness! If I was to act as I ought, I should turn the house topsy-turvy. But you must have your way, my dear child: I'll be moderation itself, if you desire it; you know I have no will but your's: [*Weeps.*] It is my misfortune to love you too well——

LISIMON.

I should be glad when you have finish'd your preamble, that you would let me know the matter in question.

COUNTESS.

Silence, then, and hear me speak: I have a long time put up with your unpolish'd behaviour, out of regard to my daughter, and the law-suit I have depending; but now you must expect to hear a little of my mind. Are you not asham'd to suffer yourself to be govern'd by your son, and to countenance him in his foolish passion for a little pert coquette, that has turn'd both your brains? for shame, for shame!

JULIA.

This is beyond all bearing! madam, I shall expect satisfaction for these injurious reflections.

COUNTESS.

How! A little inſignificant creature like you, with hardly two ounces of noble blood in her veins, pretend to demand ſatisfaction of a perſon of my quality! Of me, who am deſcended from the moſt ancient family in the county where I reſide! Heark'e, child, I adviſe you to go back to ſchool again, and learn how to behave yourſelf. Satisfaction indeed!

ANGELICA.

Indeed, madam, you drive me to deſpair, by this behaviour.

LISIMON.

Come, I find I muſt cut this matter ſhort: This young lady, madam, [*Pointing to* Julia] is not in the leaſt to be blamed for my ſon's infidelity; ſo far from having any ſhare in it, ſhe declared to him, that ſhe would not accept his hand, unleſs you and your daughter gave your conſents; neither did I give him mine, but upon thoſe terms; ſo you are ſtill the miſtreſs to do as you pleaſe——the whole depends upon your determination.

COUNTESS.

No, no, it does not depend upon me; if it did, I would ſhew you fine work. My daughter, here, governs me; for every one is govern'd in this world. She inherits her father's diſpoſition; ſhe has no life, no ſpirit about her; ſhe is even mean enough to conſent that Valere ſhall marry this young woman; but I'd have him to know he muſt aſk my conſent firſt; and living or dead, he ſhall have no other wife than my daughter.

ANGELICA.

It is not thro' meanneſs, madam, that I ſuffer Valere to prove falſe to his vows; but my ſoul diſdains the thought of an alliance with a man who can entertain an affection for another.

COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Well, daughter, I begin to think you are in the right.——Yes, yes, it is certainly juſt to repay contempt with ſcorn.

ANGELICA.

You know, madam, it is what we had agreed upon.

COUNTESS.

Had we? well, I profeſs I had forgot it.

ANGELICA.

Let us, therefore, conclude matters quietly, and take our leaves in as genteel a manner as poſſible.

COUNTESS.

Doubtleſs; I would not do an ungenteel thing for the world. Sir, as for your ſon, he's a young fool; and miſs and he ſeem quite cut out for each other, ſo you may marry them as ſoon as you pleaſe; neither my daughter nor myſelf will oppoſe it in the leaſt: and to convince you of the truth of what I ſay, we ſhall ſtay in your houſe no longer than to-morrow, and then quit it, never more to return. Your ſervant. [*Going.*]

LISIMON.

Hold, madam, hear me ſpeak: I promiſe you that I will oblige my ſon———

COUNTESS.

No, no, ſir, we have done with both you and your ſon.——Come, miſs Angelica, let us withdraw; and I charge you, on my bleſſing, that I never hear you mention the name of the unworthy wretch again.

ANGELICA.

Fear not a relapſe on my ſide, madam. I perceive I begin to hate him now, as much as I once loved him. [*Exeunt* Counteſs *and* Angelica.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

LISIMON.

'Sdeath! all my meaſures are diſconcerted!

JULIA.

What will become of me! I ſuffer'd the abuſe of that mad-woman with patience, in hopes that it would have ended in your being oblig'd to reſtore your ſon to them; but this unexpected reverſe has plung'd me into the moſt cruel of all dilemma's!

LISIMON.

I am no leſs embarraſs'd than yourſelf, by the falſe artifice I made uſe of, in giving my promiſe to my ſon, in the full perſuaſion that the counteſs would never be brought to agree to it. If I recal this promiſe, it will give him a pretence to fly out, and commit a thouſand follies and extravagancies, which will ruin him in the opinion of the world: and, undeſerving as he may be of my affection, ſuch a thing would ſenſibly affect me. [*Muſing.*] There is no other way——It muſt be ſo——My dear Julia, I am at length reſolv'd to overcome the weakneſs I feel for you, as the only way to prevent my ſon's utter ruin, and entreat you to aſſiſt me in this laudable deſign: if you will conſent to marry him, I am certain that your charms, good ſenſe, and virtue, will reclaim him from his vices and errors.

NERINA.

Come, madam, yield with a good grace; you are not the firſt pretty woman who has reform'd a rake. When you are marry'd, I will aſſiſt you with my advice, and I warrant we will make him a good huſband between us, or the houſe ſhall be too hot to hold him.

JULIA.

You are deceiv'd yourſelf, Nerina, and want to deceive me. I cannot reflect on the conſequences of ſuch an union, without trembling; and yet to convince you, ſir, of my gratitude for the favours I have receiv'd from you, I will do my utmoſt to bring myſelf to marry your ſon: but I beg you will give me ſome longer time, and leave me to myſelf to conſider of my determination.

LISIMON.

With all my heart—and ſhall wait with impatience for your anſwer. [*Exit* Liſimon.

SCENE V.

JULIA *and* NERINA [*ſtand for ſome time looking at each other.*]

NERINA.

Well, madam.

JULIA.

Well, Nerina.

NERINA.

Will you at length hearken to reaſon?

JULIA.

It muſt not be by following your advice, then. What! would you have me wed a thoughtleſs young rake, who can love no one but himſelf? who likes thro' caprice, is inconſtant by habit, and debauch'd by conſtitution! one made up of vices and imperfections; and who, inſtead of endeavouring to hide them from the world, has the ridiculous vanity to glory in them, and to deſire they ſhould be thought greater than they really are!

NERINA.

And yet theſe are the very kind of men who turn the heads of half the girls in the nation.

JULIA.

Ah, Leander! is it poſſible you can thus neglect and abandon me? you firſt taught me to love, and now drive me to the cruel neceſſity of renouncing a paſſion that ought to end only with my life.

NERINA.

What! can you ſtill ſuffer yourſelf to be thus impos'd upon by falſe hopes? Ah, for heaven's ſake, think no more of this Leander! he is either dead, or what is worſe, inconſtant——But good God! who do I ſee! ah! [*Shrieks.*]

JULIA.

For heaven's ſake, what ails thee?

NERINA.

Oh, madam, yonder is Criſpin!

JULIA.

What Criſpin? Leander's man!

NERINA.

The ſame! Support me, or I ſhall faint.

JULIA.

I am in a ſtrange ſituation. I know not whether to be pleas'd or concern'd.

SCENE VI.

Enter CRISPIN, *booted and ſpurred.*

CRISPIN.

Hola! ho! hola! men! maids! valets! ſervants! why what a devil of a houſe is this! I believe one may go from the garrets to the kitchen, and not find a living creature. Hola! ho!——ha! what have we here? two females?——even ſo!——and by Jove one is mrs. Julia,——hey!——and t'other my dear Nerina, by all that's good! Ah! bleſſing

on

on your ſweet faces! how have you fared ever ſince ——whu! What a pox, is this the way you receive one after an abſence of three years? You ſtand as if you had loſt your ſenſes.

JULIA.

Your unexpected arrival has ſurprized me in ſuch a manner that I can hardly ſpeak.

NERINA.

O lord! ay! and I too am ſo—ſo—ſo confuſed ſome how—that——

CRISPIN.

Two women and not a word between them? you muſt be violently ſurprized indeed! But pray, my dears, is it joy or grief that ties up your tongues?

JULIA.

Where is your maſter? what is he doing? Is he in health? does he love me ſtill? quick, quick, dear Criſpin, anſwer me.

CRISPIN. [*Putting his fingers to his mouth.*]

Mum! not a word from me till I have embraced my dear Nerina here, and then I'll talk like a counſellor. Come then, receive to thy arms thy own dear huſband that is to be, and ſtrangle him with thy embraces.

[*Runs and catches* Nerina *in his arms, who endeavours to get looſe from him.*]

NERINA.

Ah! my poor dear Criſpin; how glad am I to ſee you! But alas!——

JULIA.

Lord! you may explain yourſelves by and by; but for heaven's ſake ſatisfy my impatience.

CRISPIN.

To be ſure; but I want to know the reaſon why Nerina ———.

JULIA.

Anſwer me, I tell you.

CRISPIN.

Immediately. In the firſt place then——ſtay, I muſt have another kiſs of her.

JULIA. [*Pulling him back.*]

Heark'ye, Criſpin, I ſhall be very angry preſently; where is your maſter?

CRISPIN,

In Paris; we are juſt arrived.

JULIA.

In Paris! what joyful news! what? what is he about? how comes it he is not here?

CRISPIN.

Why, madam, you muſt know he is dreſſing himſelf, that he may appear in a proper manner before you: as to me, whom no undreſs can diſfigure, and who burnt with impatience to ſee this little gypſy, I ran hither juſt as you ſee me, boots and all.

JULIA.

You have greatly obliged me. Here are twenty pieces for thy welcome.

CRISPIN.

A thouſand thanks, my good young lady—[*To* Nerina.] Here, my dear, take that towards buying thee a wedding gown.

NERINA. [*Taking the money, and crying.*]

Oh! oh! oh!

CRISPIN.

What a devil of a note is that? why, what am I to think of all this? the ſight of me frightens thee; and my money makes thee cry.

JULIA.

Pr'ythee leave her to herſelf and talk of my affairs.

CRISPIN.

Charity begins at home you know, madam; and I have ſome few doubts to clear up——

JULIA.

Oh! I ſhall loſe all patience! how does Leander?

CRISPIN.

Immoderately well, as you will ſee preſently.

JULIA.

But how comes it that he did not write to me for ſo long a time?

CRISPIN.

Becauſe he had made an oath that you ſhould never hear of him till he was in a condition to marry you.

JULIA.

You reſtore me to life again. But how has he employed himſelf during his abſence?

CRISPIN.

In making his fortune. You know that we both ſet out upon that deſign; my maſter in hopes of meriting thereby your hand, and your humble ſervant to make himſelf worthy this ſlut here.

JULIA.

Well, and have you ſucceeded?

CRISPIN.

Yes, but not without great difficulty. But that was my maſter's fault; I wanted to go the ſhorteſt

way to work. I am acquainted with ſeveral pretty innocent legerdemain tricks, by which you may dive into the purſes of others as if they were your own; but ſomething more is required too beſides ſkill and addreſs: a man muſt have a good ſtock of courage and reſolution; be perſuaded that the goods of this world were meant to be in common; and that every thing is fiſh that comes to net.

JULIA.

Fie, Criſpin! how could you adviſe your maſter;——but I know Leander too well; he is incapable of making his fortune by ſuch methods.

CRISPIN.

'Sdeath! that's the very thing that has been like to undo him. He has always piqued himſelf ſo much upon following honour! and ſhe is a moſt ſcurvy guide, for ſhe'll carry you right to the door of a gaol or a workhouſe. Accordingly no-body in their ſenſes takes any notice of her now-a-days; and as for my part, I have broke with her for ever; I remember a line in a play (for ſimple as I ſtand here, I was ſome years in the ſervice of a capital player, and have all the beſt ſpeeches at my fingers ends) and it was this:

"Honour's a ſaint whoſe altars blaze no more."

JULIA.

But after all, what have you done ſince you have been away?

CRISPIN.

Well then, now I'll give you a particular account of our adventures. In the firſt place, as ſoon as we left Paris, we were ſurprized to find ourſelves out of it.

NERINA.

Admirable that, ha! ha! ha!

CRISPIN.

Oh! you can find your tongue to make a jeſt of me!

NERINA.

Pr'ythee proceed with your journey.

CRISPIN.

Well then, I am ſet out. From Paris we went ſtrait to Rouen. Mercy on us! what a heap of odd people there are in that city.

NERINA.

So there is in every city.

CRISPIN.

When we got there, we did not know which way to turn ourſelves for the ready.

JULIA.

Why, your maſter took an hundred piſtoles with him!

CRISPIN.

He did ſo, madam; but being willing to pick up as much as he could by the way, he hardly took time to pull off his boots before he ſat down to a gaming table, and ſtaked his whole ſtock-capital upon three cards; and in leſs time than I have been telling it, he had not a ſouſe left.

JULIA.

And what did you do in this extremity?

CRISPIN.

Why—we—we eat our horſes.

JULIA.

Eat your horſes?

NERINA.

What ſtomachs!

CRISPIN.

That is, I mean we were obliged to ſell our horſes for money to get us a ſupper. After this, you may imagine we were put to our ſhifts; ſo we e'en walked to Dieppe, where we embarked for England; there fortune ſmiled upon us. As ſoon as we got to London my maſter went to pay a viſit to a relation of his who lives there; and after the firſt compliment, touched him for twenty guineas, with which he try'd his luck again, and won a thouſand.

NERINA.

Come, come, ſo far goes on very well.

CRISPIN.

We now thought ourſelves poſſeſs'd of an inexhauſtible treaſure. And what uſe do you think my maſter made of it?

JULIA.

How ſhould I know, that never heard a ſyllable from either of you?

CRISPIN.

Why, as we were in a hurry to make our fortunes, we entered into partnerſhip with a French banker in great reputation there; a Gaſcon by birth.

NERINA.

What an aſſociation!

CRISPIN.

Well, now we commence bankers. Odsheart it is a fine trade! I know none to come up to it but that of an exciſeman; money rained in upon us from all ſides: and then we lived! Lord bleſs us, how we lived! I had a belly a yard round; its plaguily dwindled away ſince.

NERINA.

I was thinking ſo.

JULIA.

And what did you do with your money? Did your maſter game it all away?

CRISPIN.

He would play ſometimes, but then he generally won, and always threw his gains into the common ſtock. As for me, I made ſhift to pick up ſome few ſcore of ſtray pieces, which I took care to lock up ſafe by themſelves. When my maſter thought he had amaſſed a pretty plentiful ſum, he propoſed a day of account to his partner, in order to divide the capital. The honeſt Gaſcon promis'd to ſettle matters in two days time, without fail, and give us our ſhare.

NERINA.

Very well.

CRISPIN.

Accordingly, at the end of that time, he decamped with the money, and left us the ſtrong box.

NERINA.

Oh, the villain!

CRISPIN.

And when we came to look into it, it was ſwept as clean as the back of your hand.

JULIA.

After this, you and your maſter came back again to France, I ſuppoſe.

CRISPIN.

Yes, upon my crutches.

NERINA.

That is to ſay, upon the ſtrength of the ſtray pieces you had pounded.

CRISPIN.

Even ſo; and immediately upon our arrival, my maſter went poſt to Bourdeaux, in ſearch of our gentleman, whom he knew to belong to that place,

but there was no finding him. My maſter, out of revenge, reſolved to blaſt his character, by publiſhing the whole affair. A relation of his, who lived in the place, took it into his head to defend his cauſe, and pick'd an occaſion of quarrelling with my maſter upon it, who happening to be in no very good humour, ſaluted him with an hearty box on the ear; upon which, my gentleman draws his ſword, and the affair was ſettled in a trice.

JULIA.

How?

CRISPIN.

Why, my maſter ſent him into the other world, to ſee if his relation had hid himſelf there.

JULIA.

Mercy on us!

CRISPIN.

After this, we made the beſt of our way out of the town; and for greater ſecurity, chang'd our names and habits. In ſhort, after a multitude of other adventures, we found a happy reſting place; where, under favour of our borrow'd names, we enrich'd ourſelves conſiderably. But here comes my maſter, who will tell you the reſt.

SCENE VII.

Enter LEANDER, *who runs to* Julia, *and catches her in his arms.*

LEANDER.

May I believe my ſenſes? Is it you I behold? You, I thus claſp, my charming, my ever lov'd Julia!

JULIA.

Is it you, my dear Leander?

LEANDER.

Yes, it is your Leander, who lives alone for you; and who ſhall deſpiſe the fortune he has acquir'd, unleſs it proves the joyful means of making you happy.

JULIA.

I can be ſo only with you. Alas! what perſecution have I ſuffer'd in your abſence! Had you arrived a little later, you would have found your Julia the wife of another! A kind of guardian, ſet over me by my uncle, would have compell'd me———

LEANDER.

That would have been a mortal ſtroke, indeed! I would have left nothing undone to revenge the violence offer'd you; but thank heaven you are ſtill free! I return as fond as ever; and, to complete my happineſs, I find you ſtill faithful. My wiſhes are now complete.

JULIA.

And ſo are mine.

CRISPIN.

Nerina, I deſire you'll take to yourſelf everything my maſter ſays to madam; as I ſhall, to myſelf, whatever madam replies.

NERINA. [*Aſide.*]

How unhappy am I?

JULIA.

I've heard all your adventures from honeſt Criſpin, here, and think them very extraordinary;—but the beſt is, that you have made a fortune.

LEANDER.

How cou'd I fail? love was my guide; and ſucceſs ever awaits thoſe who march under his banners. But ſay, my dear Julia, is your uncle dead, that you are in mourning?

JULIA.

No, it is for my mother, who dy'd about a month ago.

LEANDER.

I heartily congratulate you; for, from what I have always heard you ſay, ſhe was one of the worſt of parents.

JULIA.

Indeed ſhe prov'd but too much ſo. But methinks you are in your ſables, too, Leander: Are you in mourning for any one?

LEANDER.

Has not Criſpin told you?

CRISPIN.

No, ſir; I told madam all your adventures, except the laſt, and that I left for you to relate.

JULIA.

Once more, I aſk you, if you are in mourning?

LEANDER.

I am.

JULIA.

And for whom?

LEANDER.

My wife.

JULIA.

Your wife! faithleſs man! Have you marry'd, then, ſince you have been abſent?

CRISPIN.

Yes, thank heaven! but don't be angry, madam; for this ſame marriage did not occaſion the leaſt infidelity towards you; did it, ſir?

LEANDER.

That my deareſt Julia may be certain of.

JULIA.

And ſo you have been really married?

LEANDER.

What could I do? I came to a country town, under a borrow'd name, without a ſhilling in my pocket, or any viſible means of getting one.

CRISPIN.

And a tender little chicken, of threeſcore and ten, falls in love with him at firſt ſight.——

LEANDER.

She was immenſely rich; and, in exchange for my hand, offer'd me her whole fortune. I conſented, and we were married.——

CRISPIN.

But my maſter being all impatience to come back to you, madam, contriv'd to lay the old lady ſafe under-ground, in leſs than ſix months after he marry'd her.

LEANDER.

And flew to lay her fortune at your feet; and at my arrival, find myſelf condemn'd by you for what I have done. Is this juſt or kind, my deareſt Julia?

JULIA.

O'my conſcience, I cannot help ſmiling at this adventure, it is ſo truly comic.

NERINA.

You muſt forgive him his infidelity, for the ſake of his addreſs.

JULIA

And ſo I do, from the bottom of my heart. But huſh, here comes the gentleman of the houſe.

SCENE. VIII.

Enter LISIMON.

LISIMON.

Julia, I am come to acquaint you with ſome news that will ſurprize you.

JULIA.

JULIA.

What is it, pray, ſir?

LISIMON.

Your uncle is juſt arrived: He took the opportunity of coming over in a ſhip that ſail'd ſome months ſooner than the reſt.

JULIA.

My uncle here? good God!

LISIMON.

He waits for you within; I have juſt left him.

JULIA.

This is indeed a day of joy!

LISIMON.

It is ſo, if you will be pleas'd with marrying my ſon; for that is your uncle's deſire, and one of the firſt things he mention'd to me.

JULIA.

I'll go this inſtant, and throw myſelf at his feet.

LEANDER.

Ha! this is an unexpected obſtacle! Wretch that I am!

LISIMON [*To* Nerina.]

Who is that young man?

NERINA.

Shall I tell him, madam?

JULIA.

I know not what to ſay—I dread——Cruel extremity!

LISIMON.

Who are you, pray, ſir? and what may be your buſineſs in my houſe?

LEANDER.

Sir, I came to——

LISIMON. [*Perceiving* Criſpin, *who is making a number of low bows to him.*]

Hey-day! and what queer figure is that, again?

CRISPIN.

This queer figure has the honour of being your honour's moſt obedient humble ſervant.

LISIMON.

My honour's humble ſervant looks like a great rogue.

LEANDER.

I'll be anſwerable for him.

LISIMON.

And pray who are you, that take upon you to be anſwerable, hey?

LEANDER.

Why, I am a man, as you ſee; and I am come into your houſe, as you call it, to know, if the young gentleman, your ſon, has the boldneſs to perſiſt in his intentions in marrying Julia againſt my conſent.

LISIMON.

Againſt your conſent! pray what authorizes you to talk in this ſtile?

LEANDER.

Every thing. My love to Julia; her's to me: the faith we have mutually plighted each other; and, what is ſtill more, the reſolution I have taken to die, rather than give her up to any other man breathing.

LISIMON. [*To* Julia.]

By the manner of his talking, this muſt certainly be the Leander you have ſo often mention'd to me.

LEANDER.

I am the ſame, ſir.

LISIMON.

Give me your hand, sir, I am heartily rejoic'd at your return; for I am as much afraid of my son's marrying Julia, as you can be; and had infinitely rather see her your wife, than his. Come in with me, and I'll present you to Licander, and join my entreaties to those of Julia, in your behalf.

JULIA.

Dear sir, how greatly do you oblige me. Your hand, Leander.

LEANDER. [*To* Lisimon.]

You may be assur'd, sir, that I will not die ungrateful for this generous behaviour.

LISIMON.

Come, come, let us in, without further ceremony. [*Exeunt* Lisimon, Leander, *and* Julia.

SCENE IX.

Enter NERINA.

CRISPIN. [*Pulling back* Nerina, *who is going out.*]

Hold, hold, my princess; you and I must come to a little explanation, now.

NERINA.

Another time; at present I must go and pay my respects to my mistress's uncle.

CRISPIN.

Respects! a fiddle-stick of respects! It is your duty to stay and hear what I have to say, first: Is it thus you receive me, after an absence of three long years? Speak! have you forgot me? I am not alter'd since I saw thee last, unless it be for the better.

NERINA. [*Weeping.*]

Oh, Crispin! Crispin! you pierce my heart!

CRISPIN.

CRISPIN.

No, you ſhall not go; you ſhall not leave me, Nerina! The baggage has certainly play'd me ſome ſlippery trick! [*Aſide.*]

NERINA.

For heaven's ſake, let us part; I tremble, leſt we ſhould be ſurpriz'd together.

CRISPIN.

Ay, ay, I find how it is; I obſerv'd the old man ogling you juſt now——What! you are in his pay, I ſuppoſe?

NERINA.

Ah, there's nothing in that; it is ſomething a thouſand times worſe——

CRISPIN.

Zounds! what d'ye mean? Why, ſure Nerina, you have not been doing any fooliſh thing in my abſence?

NERINA.

Indeed but I have, my poor Criſpin, and the moſt fooliſh of all things; tho' in the main, I have nothing to reproach myſelf with—and yet I have been to blame; I have, to be ſure——Believe me, it will be better to abandon me, and never ſee me again.

CRISPIN.

How! never ſee thee again! Then I muſt go hang myſelf.

NERINA.

Ah, poor lad, thou might'ſt as well be hang'd, as to know the truth.

CRISPIN.

I'm much oblig'd to you——But come, without further ceremony, tell me, haſt thou prov'd unfaithful to me?

NERINA.

I have.

CRISPIN.

You have!

NERINA.

I was a woman, you know, and ſingle; that is ſome excuſe.

CRISPIN.

And is it poſſible, then, that, after having given thy heart to me, thou could'ſt love another?

NERINA.

Not ſo, neither; but I ſuffer'd myſelf to be perſuaded.

CRISPIN.

So then you was willing, in my abſence, to ſtay your ſtomach a little, hey?

NERINA.

Cannot you gueſs the truth? I am——Oh! I have not courage to utter it———

CRISPIN.

Are? what are you? ſpeak!———

NERINA.

I am———

CRISPIN.

What?

NERINA.

Marry'd.

CRISPIN.

Marry'd! what, ſeriouſly marry'd?

NERINA.

Seriouſly.

CRISPIN. [*Leaning on her, and repeating affectedly.*]

Help me to bear my ſuff'rings as I ought:
They fall more heavy, as they come unthought.

NERINA.

Keep your diſtance, fool! if my huſband ſhould come and ſurpriſe us!

CRISPIN.

Thy huſband! Haſt thou a huſband, then? Who is he that dare to fill my place?

NERINA.

One Paſquin, footman to the old gentleman's ſon.

CRISPIN.

If he was footman to Belzebub, I would cut off his ears! Is he jealous?

NERINA.

As a tyger.

CRISPIN.

I'm glad of it; he ſhall die by inches, then: I'll broil the raſcal upon a gridiron.

NERINA.

Lord bleſs me! you make me tremble.

CRISPIN.

But pr'ythee, my adorable, had the devil enter'd that little body of thine, to ſet thee thus a gadding?

NERINA.

What could I do? I heard nothing from you. I thought you dead and bury'd. It was all your fault.

CRISPIN.

No, no, it was my maſter's: he would not ſuffer me to write to thee; he was afraid his marriage would be diſcover'd, if any one knew where we were.

NERINA.

Well, what is done cannot be recalled. Thy abſence, and ſtill more cruel ſilence, drove me to deſpair. I grew impatient; I thought thee dead: and ſo great was my grief, that nothing but a huſband could comfort me for the loſs of thee.

CRISPIN.

Dea r, tender-hearted creature! how you melt me! Oh, cruel, cruel fate!

NERINA.

Oh treacherous fortune!

CRISPIN.

Was it for this I killed two horſes on the road? to find thee in the arms of another?

NERINA.

Was it for this I ruſhed ſo haſtily into marriage? to mourn, in bitter repentance, all the reſt of my life? Ah! leave me, leave me, Criſpin; I cannot bear thy complaints and reproaches.

CRISPIN.

Farewell!

I'll bear my ſorrows from thy ſight away;
And paſs in anguiſh all the live-long day!

till thou art a widow; and then I'll be thy ſecond huſband.

NERINA.

Well ſaid! and I promiſe thee, that ſhall be as ſoon as poſſible.

CRISPIN.

The ſooner, the better.

NERINA.

Adieu, too lovely and ill-fated Criſpin!

CRISPIN.

Adieu, too lovely, too haſty Nerina!

[*Exeunt ſeverally, looking back at each other.*]

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

NERINA. *Sola.*

WHAT an unfortunate creature am I! my rogue of a huſband has overheard every thing I ſaid to Criſpin; even to the appointment we made at parting. It will be impoſſible for me to face him! and yet he's hunting for me from room to room. Where can I hide myſelf?—But, after all, what a fool am I to be afraid of his reproaches! why did not the booby make himſelf more agreeable? Come, come, I'll e'en pluck up a ſpirit, let him ſee that I am a true woman; and give him as good as he brings.

SCENE II.

Enter PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

Ho, ho! I have found you at laſt, madam, have I? Are you tired of ſhunning me?

NERINA.

Are you tir'd of hunting after me?

PASQUIN.

Why, have you the impudence to look me in the face, after your open violation of the matrimonial contract?

NERINA.

A great piece of buſineſs, indeed, whether it be violated or kept!

PASQUIN.

qu'il ſoit, il m'eſt agreable, puiſqu'il va m'oter une vie qui m'eſt devenue odieuſe depuis que vous m'avez oubliée. Si vous retournez à Charleville, on vous apprendra mon crime ſans qu'on ſoupçonne que vous y avez part, car je ne vous ai jamais nommé, & j'ai cru devoir ce ménagement à un homme, dont l'honneur & le repos me ſont plus chers que moi-meme. La ſeule grace que je vous demande en mourant, c'eſt de faire prier Dieu pour moi, & de croire que s'il me fait miſericorde, je n'emploirai mes prieres auprés de lui, qu'afin qu'il vous comble de proſperitez. Adieu, je meurs toute à vous.

Quelles impreſſions ne me fit point la lecture de cette lettre ! Je courus chez elle, plus reſolu que jamais de ne point ſouffrir qu'elle ſe fit Religieuſe ; mais je ne la trouvai plus. Je ſçus qu'elle avoit eu quelques converſations avec un Pere Recollet ; j'allai demander ce Pere, qui refuſa de m'en dire des nouvelles. Je fus prés de huit jours à la chercher, & enfin j'appris qu'elle etoit à l'Hotel-Dieu à deſſein d'y prendre le voile. Je courus la voir, & on conſentit avec beaucoup de peine que je lui parlaſſe. Jamais je n'avois été ſi tranſporté. Je me jettai à ſes pieds, & je lui jurai de me poignarder ſi elle

elle ne m'ecoutoit. Mon deſeſpoir l'attendrit, & elle me dit les larmes aux yeux, que pretendez vous faire, Monſieur? Je ne puis etre à vous ſans expoſer votre reputation, & vous auriez une honte eternelle d'avoir epouſé une fille que vous avez arrachée de la potence. Il n'eſt pas, lui dis-je, queſtion de vous epouſer, puiſque vous ne voulez pas que l'on en parle; mais au moins, ſi vous avez à vous faire Religieuſe, prenez une autre Maiſon que celle-ci. Mon Dieu, Monſieur, reprit cette genereuſe perſonne, je ne veux point vous etre à charge. Je ſuis venue dans cette Maiſon, parce que j'y ſerai reçue pour rien. Je ne puis choiſir un autre Convent ſans qu'il vous en coute, & je ſçai que vous n'etes pas en etat de faire cette depenſe. Ah! lui dis-je, ma vie & mon bien ſont à vous, & quoi qu'il en coute, je vous ferai recevoir dans toute autre Maiſon où je croirai que vous trouverez plus de douceur. Je joignis mille empreſſemens à ces paroles, mais je ne pus en rien obtenir, & elle me quitta en me diſant un adieu dont je me ſentis percer le cœur. Je crus qu'il n'y avoit point d'autre parti à prendre que de demander la Superieure. Elle vint, & je lui dis que je m'oppoſois à la reception de cette fille; qu'elle etoit ma fem-

PASQUIN.

Yes, yes! you want to be with him, I ſuppoſe! but here's a good oaken cudgel, miſtreſs, that ſhall ſoon rid me of him.

SCENE III.

Enter VALERE.

VALERE.

Well, Paſquin, I have ſucceeded to my wiſh! Julia is to be my wife, and my father is ready to hang himſelf!

PASQUIN.

Ah, ſir! matters are ſtrangely alter'd with us! I have ſurpriſing news to tell you.

VALERE.

News! what news?

PASQUIN.

Since you have been away, the moſt unaccountable affair has happened! my ſpouſe here has ſecured a ſecond huſband, and your Julia has met with her firſt lover!

VALERE.

Her firſt lover!

PASQUIN.

Even ſo, ſir; he arriv'd within theſe two hours: and this fine gentleman's gentleman proves to be the Adonis of my rib here. Truſt me but theſe chaps have done a great deal of buſineſs in a very ſhort time.

VALERE.

Ha! ha! here are fine doings on foot! This is a glorious opportunity for me to diſtinguiſh myſelf, and to triumph, at once, over my father's ill-humour, my rival's pretenſions, and my miſtreſs's coyneſs. And as for you, my ſighing Celadon, whoever

whoever you are, I ſhall quickly ſend you to chant forth your melancholly ſtrains of diſappointed love to the neighbouring rocks and woods. But, pr'ythee, Paſquin, where is this romantic ſwain? I muſt teach him a little better manners.

NERINA.

I would have you take care, ſir, that he is not before-hand with you in that point. He is not ſo eaſily frighten'd I aſſure you. Be adviſed by me, and endeavour rather to gain over my miſtreſs's uncle, who arriv'd here almoſt at the ſame time with your rival; and, to my knowledge, is inclinable to favour your pretenſions.

VALERE.

Ar't ſerious?

NERINA.

Quite ſo: but here comes your rival.

PASQUIN.

And my worthy ſucceſſor with him.

NERINA.

I'll leave you to yourſelves. [*Exit* Nerina.]

PASQUIN.

Shall I do the ſame?

VALERE.

No, no; ſtay here.

SCENE IV.

Enter LEANDER *and* CRISPIN.

CRISPIN. [*To* Leander, *entering.*]

And ſo, this villainous old uncle came juſt in the nick of time, only to knock every thing on the head?

LEANDER.

He would not ſo much as hear me ſpeak; and even forbid his niece to mention my name to him. He thinks that he is bound in gratitude to give Julia to Liſimon's ſon.

CRISPIN.

A damn'd old ſcoundrel!

VALERE. [*To* Paſquin, *aſide.*]

The ſight of him piques my vanity. I can hardly contain my paſſion.

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere, *aſide.*]

And the ſight of his man puts me out of all patience.

LEANDER. [*To* Criſpin, *aſide.*]

Who is that young man, Criſpin?

CRISPIN. [*To* Leander, *aſide.*]

Why, I have a ſtrong notion it is your rival.

LEANDER. [*Aſide.*]

The emotions of my heart tell me ſo!

CRISPIN. [*Aſide.*]

And that worthy gentleman with him, is my miſtreſs's huſband. If you'll lend me your aſſiſtance, I'll knock him on the head.

VALERE. [*Coming up to* Leander.]

May I aſk what brings you here, ſir?

LEANDER.

Whence ariſes your curioſity?

VALERE.

You may not know me, perhaps.

LEANDER.

I cannot ſay I do; but I ſuppoſe you are mr. Liſimon's ſon.

VALERE.

You are right. And this houſe you are now in is my father's. Are you ignorant of my pretenſions?

LEANDER.

Why that queſtion?

VALERE.

Becauſe, I am apt to think, if you was inform'd of them, you would not chuſe to remain much longer here; nor think of favouring us with any more of your viſits.

LEANDER.

I have already been inform'd, ſir, ſince my arrival, that you are under ſome engagements to a young lady of great beauty and merit, whoſe name is Angelica; and that matters between you are on ſuch a footing, that you cannot diſpenſe with making her your wife.

VALERE.

Whether I am or not, is no buſineſs of yours I preſume.

LEANDER.

Certainly I have no buſineſs with your affairs; and whether you keep your word with the lady or not, is a matter of indifference to me: but, if the motives of breaking your engagements are what I ſuſpect, I ſhall then think myſelf oblig'd to demand an account of your actions.

VALERE.

You?

LEANDER.

Yes; I, ſir.

VALERE.

And by what right, pray?

LEANDER.

I'll tell you, in a few words: my name is Leander; I love Julia, and flatter myſelf that I am beloved by her in return: I am lately come from abroad on purpoſe to marry her: if there is nothing in this declaration that is offenſive to you, I am ready to rank myſelf in the number of your friends; if it ſhould prove otherwiſe, I know the meaſures I have to take to free Julia from your importunities.

VALERE.

Now, then, take my anſwer in as conciſe terms. My father wanted me to wed Angelica; I thought Julia more agreeable: he conſented I ſhould marry her, and marry her I will; and concern myſelf ſo little about your menaces, that I am going this inſtant to her uncle, to prevail on him to ratify our union.

LEANDER.

I ſhall follow to prevent it, if poſſible: and, if you ſhould ſucceed, do not expect to enjoy your triumph long. [*Exit* Valere, *follow'd by* Leander.

SCENE V.

CRISPIN. [*Aſide.*]

Now, I muſt bully my gentleman.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

Here is an opportunity to revenge my honour.

[*Here they both clap on their hats, and look at each other fiercely.* Criſpin *draws on his gloves deliberately;* Paſquin *does the ſame, and then ſpeaks.*]

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

A damn'd brawny fellow this!

CRISPIN. [*Aſide.*]

How fierce the raſcal looks!

PASQUIN. [*Half loud.*]

Hem! Is not this the puppy that gives himself airs to be in love with my wife?

CRISPIN. [*In the same voice.*]

Courage, Crispin! This is certainly the animal who has robb'd thee of Nerina.

PASQUIN. [*Aside.*]

It is the same! and I yet suffer him to live!

CRISPIN. [*Aside.*

The very booby her husband! and I have not yet made day-light shine thro' him!

PASQUIN. [*Aside.*]

We must come to the point; there's no time to be lost.

CRISPIN. [*Aside.*]

I must conquer or die.

PASQUIN. [*Aside.*]

I'll begin by affronting him—Every thing should be done in form——This fellow's countenance displeases me. [*Here* Pasquin *raises his voice, and* Crispin *does the same.*]

CRISPIN. [*Aside.*]

That face gives me the heartburn!

PASQUIN. [*Aside.*]

'Sblood! there's no joking with him.

CRISPIN. [*Aside.*]

Zounds! I'm afraid he'll take me by the throat.

PASQUIN. [*Aside, and shaking his stick.*]

I'll try his courage a little: hem!

CRISPIN. [*Aside, and doing the same.*]

I'll see what he's made of.

PASQUIN.

Come on!

CRISPIN.

Do you come on.

PASQUIN.

I wait for you.

CRISPIN.

And I for you.

PASQUIN.

It is your buſineſs to begin firſt.

CRISPIN.

No, it is yours.

PASQUIN.

Have I not marry'd your miſtreſs?

CRISPIN.

Am not I your wife's gallant?

PASQUIN.

My wife's gallant! death and furies! I can hold no longer.

CRISPIN.

Marry'd my miſtreſs! nay, then I'm rouz'd!

[*Here they both offer to ſtrike; but each draws back as the other advances.*]

PASQUIN.

If you have any regard to yourſelf, keep off.

CRISPIN.

If you love whole bones, come not a ſtep nearer.

PASQUIN.

I'll ſhew thee no quarter.

CRISPIN.

I'll make you meaſure your length on the ground.

PASQUIN.

You? go, you're a ſcoundrel!

CRISPIN.

You're a raſcal!

PASQUIN.

A poltroon!

CRISPIN.

A coward!

PASQUIN. [*Giving him a ſlap on the face.*]

Coward! take that.

CRISPIN.

Poltroon? zounds!

[*Here they offer to ſtrike again, and retreat as before.*]

PASQUIN.

Why, you run back!

CRISPIN.

And ſo do you!

PASQUIN.

It is to get more room.

CRISPIN.

And I, to make more ſure of my ſtroke.

[*They come up to each other trembling.*]

PASQUIN.

I tremble for thy life!

CRISPIN.

And I for thine.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

Heaven ſend he may run away.

CRISPIN. [*Aſide.*]

If a panic would but ſeize him!

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

My courage begins to fail me!

CRISPIN. [*Aſide, looking about him.*]

Good God! will nobody come to part us?

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

I muſt make a noiſe to alarm the houſe.

CRISPIN. [*Aſide.*]

If I raiſe my voice, it may bring ſomebody.

[*Here they ſtrike their ſticks againſt each other, and bawl as loud as poſſible.*]

Come on! have at you! take care of yourſelf! ha! ha!

PASQUIN.

Not a ſoul comes near us, by all that's good!

CRISPIN.

We may murder one another for what any one cares in this damn'd houſe!—Heark'e, friend, you ſee nobody will come to part us; ſo, e'en let us put an end to the combat by conſent.

PASQUIN.

With all my heart; we have done our duty.

CRISPIN.

Yes; I think we can defy malice on that head.

PASQUIN.

You gave me a box on the ear, and I gave you a ſlap on the face.

CRISPIN.

True. And then we brandiſh'd our ſticks at each other like brave fellows.

PASQUIN.

Ay; and fought like devils.

CRISPIN.

Valour could not be carry'd farther.

PASQUIN.

We have done every thing that could be expected from men; but, if you have a mind for t'other bout, have at you!

CRISPIN.

No; I think there's no occaſion for it. We are equally match'd, as to ſtrength and proweſs; for we

we have been fighting theſe two hours, without either being able to kill the other. So, enough of bloodſhed!

PASQUIN.

Shall we go and get our wounds dreſs'd?

CRISPIN.

No, no, let us go and crack a bottle rather; we have moſt need of that. Valour is always thirſty: and it is a cuſtom with men of honour and ſpirit to drink together after they have fought.

PASQUIN.

You are in the right: but, hold! here come our two maſters; let us ſtay and hear how matters ſtand between them.

SCENE VI.

Enter LICANDER, LISIMON, LEANDER, *and* VALERE.

LICANDER. [*To* Liſimon, *entering.*]

Well! this is the moſt extraordinary ſtory I ever heard! and my ſiſter-in-law's third marriage was a maſter-piece of folly.

LISIMON.

She liv'd like a madwoman, and ſo ſhe died. But it is amazing to me, that Julia, who is ſo amiable and prudent a young woman, ſhould be the daughter of ſuch a mother.

LICANDER.

I have much to ſay upon that ſubject; and, when we are in private, I will diſcover to you ſome ſecret adventures, which will convince you, that it is no wonder Julia ſo little reſembles my ſiſter-in-law.

LISIMON.

I am all impatience to hear them: ſatisfy my curioſity.

LICANDR.

Here are too many perſons to overhear us; the ſtory is long, ſingular, and demands ſecrecy.

LISIMON.

I'll ſoon clear the coaſt. [*To his ſon.*] Leave the the room. [*To* Leander.] You, ſir, know enough of good-breeding to ſee that your abſence would be acceptable.

LEANDER.

I'll retire, ſir. [*Going.*]

LICANDER.

No, no, by no means. If we were alone, I ſhould not have time to relate the whole to you; as ſome affairs of conſequence oblige me to go out immediately: ſo, gentlemen, you may ſtay.—But, mr. Liſimon, pray, tell me, did you know the duke of Soriento?

LISIMON.

The great Sicilian nobleman, whoſe maſter of the horſe you was, when you left him to go to the Indies?

LICANDER.

The ſame.

LISIMON.

I remember to have ſeen him ſeveral times.

LICANDER.

Do you know if he is yet living?

LISIMON.

He has been dead ſome years.

LICANDER.

And his ſon?——

LISIMON.

He was killed, in the laſt campaign, in Germany.

LICANDER.

Let me embrace you for this welcome news! Death, then, has rid me of the two perſons I moſt dreaded in the world.

LISIMON.

How ſo?

LICANDER.

You will know, when I acquaint you with the hiſtory of my life.

LISIMON.

There is only one daughter living of the duke's numerous family; and ſhe is a widow, and has no children.

LICANDER.

More fortunate ſtill! I muſt find out this lady immediately. [*Going.*]

VALERE.

Before you leave us, ſir, I muſt deſire you will determine to whom Julia is to belong.

LEANDER.

Yes, ſir; I conjure you to decide our fate.

LICANDER.

That will ſoon be done. Neither of you ſhall have her.

VALERE.

How ſir! neither of us?——

LEANDER.

Is it poſſible you can refuſe her to a man, who—

LICANDER.

Look'e, gentlemen, your rhetoric will avail nothing. You, Valere, I will by no means approve, as I can never think of giving my niece to a man

who is under engagements to another. You, ſir, I know nothing of; and therefore ſhall not beſtow a girl of Julia's fortune and merit on a ſtranger. I remember, mr. Liſimon, that the Orontes you was mentioning to me, had a ſon very young when I went to the Indies: now, as this Orontes is one of the oldeſt friends I have living, and a man to whom I owe the greateſt obligations, I am reſolved to retrieve his name and family, which I hear are upon the decline, by giving my niece Julia to his ſon, if he is a deſerving young man.

LEANDER.

Permit me, ſir, to embrace your knees, and return you thanks for my father and myſelf.

LICANDER.

What do you mean?

LISIMON.

I am ſurpriz'd!

VALERE.

And I tremble with apprehenſion!

LEANDER.

In me, ſir, you behold the ſon of Orontes, that Orontes for whom you expreſs ſo much affection.

LICANDER.

You the ſon of Orontes?

LEANDER.

I am; as I can eaſily prove to you. My father is hard by; I will go inſtantly and acquaint him with your return to France, and entreat him to come in perſon and preſent me to you.

VALERE.

What a damn'd unlucky accident is this!

LICANDER.

You could not have ſurpriz'd me more agreeably! Since Julia has an affection for you, and you are the

the ſon of a man for whom I have the moſt tender friendſhip; I ſee nothing to obſtruct your union; and I will have the pleaſure of joining your hands this very day.

LISIMON.

Now, good vain mr. ſon of mine, you ſee you have nothing to do but beat a retreat. Take my advice, and reconcile yourſelf to Angelica as ſoon as poſſible.

VALERE.

I ſhall certainly hang myſelf.

LICANDER.

I'll take my leave of you for a while: I muſt find out the widow I was ſpeaking of, and have a little diſcourſe with her before I diſpoſe of my niece: however, you may call upon me at my attorney's, where Julia and I will be ready to receive you; as I intend to acquaint her directly with my intentions of giving her to this gentleman.

LISIMON.

I'll follow you in for an explanation of ſome things you have ſaid to me.

[*Exeunt* Licander *and* Liſimon.

SCENE VII.

LEANDER. [*To* Valere.]

I ſtay behind, ſir, to know your reſolves. Have you any intention to diſpute Julia's hand with me?

VALERE.

I would undoubtedly have diſputed it to the laſt drop of my blood, had ſhe prov'd herſelf worthy of me: but, ſince ſhe is blind enough to give the preference to thee, ſhe no longer merits my regard. [*Exit* Valere, *follow'd by* Paſquin.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

Enter CRISPIN.

CRISPIN.

He could not have brought himſelf better off, if he had been a Gaſcoon.

LEANDER.

I am very glad it has ended ſo peaceably; for I ſhould have been miſerable, had he forced me to come to extremities with the ſon of a man who has ſo generouſly given me the protection of his houſe.

CRISPIN.

Well; I have not been quite ſo ſcrupulous.

LEANDER.

What do'ſt mean?

CRISPIN.

Why, I have call'd out my man.

LEANDER.

Who is he, pray?

CRISPIN.

The raſcal that has marry'd Nerina. 'Egad, I have given him his belly full.

SCENE IX.

Enter JULIA *and* NERINA.

JULIA.

Leander, I am come to congratulate you and myſelf, on this happy turn in our affairs: My uncle has given his conſent——

LEANDER.

I know all, my deareſt Julia, I myſelf prevail'd on him to confirm our union.

JULIA.

JULIA.

Now, indeed, I am happy!

LEANDER.

Charming maid! And I the moſt bleſt of men.

NERINA.

Well; I think your affairs go on ſwimmingly. You have nothing now to fear.

CRISPIN.

Unleſs the devil himſelf interferes.

LEANDER.

What on earth can prevent our happineſs? You depend only on your uncle. He has given me his promiſe; and ſome very intereſting reaſons will oblige him to obſerve it. Your mother is no longer living.

JULIA.

True; if ſhe was, ſhe would leave no ſtone unturn'd to croſs my happineſs.

NERINA.

Well, I wiſh ſhe could but come to life again, if it was only for the pleaſure of ſeeing her die a ſecond time with vexation.

LEANDER.

Why, ſure ſhe muſt have had a mortal hatred to you?

JULIA.

It ſeem'd ſo; for after abandoning me to the wide world, ſhe kept the place of her reſidence a ſecret from me for above twelve years; during which time ſhe marry'd twice, without once letting me hear from her.

LEANDER.

An unworthy woman! I am glad I never had any acquaintance with her.

JULIA.

Some little time after your departure, I found out where she was; and at the same time was inform'd, that she industriously conceal'd her first marriage, that it might not be known she had a daughter: and as she was not very well known at Lyons, it was no difficult matter for her to succeed.

LEANDER.

Lyons! did you say? was it at Lyons she liv'd?

JULIA.

At Lyons; and there she bury'd her second husband.

CRISPIN.

Odso! we must certainly have known her, sir; for to be sure she liv'd somewhere in the neighbourhood of the baroness of St. Aubin.

JULIA.

Who! who! the baroness of St. Aubin?

CRISPIN.

Ah! that was a worthy creature! Heaven rest her soul! Many's the good broad piece I have filched from her ladyship.

NERINA.

From the baroness of St. Aubin?

CRISPIN.

From the very same; ask my master, he went halves with me.

LEANDER.

Silence, Crispin!

CRISPIN.

It would have made you laugh, to see the methods we had of fleecing the old lady.

NERINA.

For heaven's sake, let us understand one another: Was you acquainted with this baroness?

CRIPIN.

CRISPIN.

Acquainted with her? a pleaſant queſtion, that! Yes, I think I may ſay I was acquainted with her, and my maſter too, for ſhe was his wife.

JULIA. [*To* Nerina.]

His wife!

LEANDER.

Yes; my wife! You ſeem ſurpriz'd.

JULIA.

The baroneſs of St. Aubin your wife?

CRISPIN.

Yes, yes, the counteſs of Filandiere that was; whoſe huſband dy'd, and left her all his fortune, and then ſhe marry'd my maſter, who went by the name of the baron of St. Aubin——He bury'd her; and thus we came by the fortune we now poſſeſs.

JULIA.

Support me, Nerina. I am loſt! undone!

LEANDER.

Good heaven's! what is the matter?

JULIA.

Unhappy man! what have you done?

LEANDER.

Done!

JULIA.

Her you marry'd, gave me birth!

LEANDER.

How! was the baroneſs of St. Aubin your mother?

NERINA.

The counteſs of Filandiere, who was the ſame perſon.

CRISPIN.

The devil has interfer'd here, indeed!

JULIA.

I was inform'd ſome time ago, that ſhe was marry'd, for the third time, to a young gentleman, who was call'd the baron of St. Aubin; but alas! I little thought it was Leander!

LEANDER.

I know not where I am. Surprize, confuſion, and deſpair o'erwhelm me! Good heaven! how can I ſupport this fatal ſtroke?

JULIA.

Unlook'd-for misfortune!

LEANDER.

Cruel reverſe!

JULIA.

Was ever ſituation like ours?

LEANDER.

Or ever ſuch pleaſing hopes ſo cruelly diſappointed?

NERINA.

For my part, I am thunder-ſtruck! that diabolical old woman ſeems reſolv'd to perſecute us, even after her death.

JULIA.

And muſt we, then, be ſeparated for ever, Leander! and at the very inſtant that we were on the point of being united for life?

LEANDER.

This is a ſtroke I cannot ſurvive! I muſt puniſh myſelf for the involuntary crime——

[*Clapping his hand to his ſword.*]

JULIA. [*Holding him.*]

For heaven's ſake, Leander! what do you intend to do?

LEANDER.

To put an end to this guilty life in your preſence.

CRISPIN.

Lord, ſir, your killing yourſelf will make things neither better nor worſe.

NERINA.

This is an obſtacle I could never have foreſeen.

LEANDER.

By what various means has fortune led me on to this precipice!

CRISPIN.

Ay; fortune, by her malice on this occaſion, has ſhewn herſelf a true woman. She is govern'd by an infernal caprice, that, by its fatal influence, produces the moſt extraordinary events; which, join'd to the baleful aſpect of ſome malignant ſtar, makes people marry old women; which old women prove to be mothers to their miſtreſſes: which miſtreſſes, by that means, they loſe for ever; which loſs drives them to deſpair; which——I am quite out, faith——

LEANDER. [*After muſing ſome time.*]

Yes, I am reſolv'd to be reveng'd on this cruel mother, who has been the cauſe of all our miſeries, by doing that, which, if ſhe was living, would give her the moſt uneaſineſs. Since I muſt part with you for ever, my deareſt Julia, I will leave you the whole of that fortune which ſhe bequeath'd to me.

JULIA.

No, Leander, I'll have none of it, ſince I cannot ſhare it with you. What fortune is wanting to live in a convent? for there I determine to paſs the remainder of my days, ſince I am depriv'd of his company, who alone could have made the world pleaſing to me.

LEANDER.

And I will inſtantly abroad, where I will hunt out danger with ſuch obſtinacy, that a ſpeedy death ſhall

ſhall terminate the miſeries of a life grown inſupportable by the loſs of thee. Farewell.

SCENE X.

As Leander *is going out, Enter* LISIMON.

LISIMON.

Well, children, you are now completely happy; there is no longer any obſtacle to your union; no one to trouble your felicity; for I am at length become a convert to reaſon: I readily conſent to your rewarding Leander's conſtancy, and have juſt reconcil'd my ſon to Angelica.

JULIA.

Alas, ſir, if you knew———

LEANDER.

Grief ſtupifies me.

NERINA.

And me too. Never, ſure, was ſo confounded an adventure.

CRISPIN. [*Stamping with his foot.*]

Such a curs'd miſchance!

LISIMON.

Hey-day! what's the meaning of all this? Julia is in tears, Leander raves, Nerina ſcolds, and this lad looks as if he was out of his ſenſes.

CRISPIN.

Zounds! is it not enough to make any one mad. Here my maſter and I have travell'd, God knows how many hundred leagues, on purpoſe to get married, and———

LISIMON.

And what?

CRISPIN.

What? why I found my miſtreſs already provided

vided with a huſband; and my maſter proves to be his miſtreſs's father-in-law.

LISIMON.

Leander Julia's father-in-law! how is that poſſible?

CRISPIN.

Oh, poſſible enough; becauſe he marry'd her mother.

LISIMON.

'Sdeath! if all this is true, Leander, you have committed a plaguy blunder. How the devil came this about?

LEANDER.

I have a ſurpriſing ſeries of adventures to acquaint you with, ſir; but be aſſur'd, that any one would, in my circumſtances, have fallen into the ſame error.

LISIMON.

Let us retire, and unravel this ſtrange ſtory: it has all the air of a romance to me.

[*Exeunt* Liſimon, Leander, *and* Julia.

SCENE XI.

NERINA.

My heart bleeds for them, poor young things!

CRISPIN.

And mine too; however, there is ſomething that comforts me in this affair, which is, that my maſter is as unhappy as myſelf; and ſo I ſhall have a companion in my ſorrows. [*Repeating.*]

We'll weep together all the live-long day,
And ſigh, 'till we have ſigh'd our grief away.

NERINA.

What, will you die?

CRISPIN.

No, no; we'll outlive our misfortunes, and defy the malice of fate.

NERINA.

Baſe fellow! will you forget me, then?

CRISPIN.

Why, faith, to deal honeſtly with thee, I am afraid this ſame huſband of thine, will live a long time; and I am always for cutting matters ſhort: a very little ſorrow ſerves my turn. Every one, you know, has a particular taſte: ſome delight in groaning and ſighing, tears and lamentation. Now they always make me fall away; whereas mirth and good fellowſhip is the joy of my life. Since I have diſcover'd you were marry'd, I have done all in my power to die with grief, but I cannot bring it about; therefore, it is no fault of mine, you know, child, if I live in ſpite of my teeth.

NERINA.

Oh, mighty well, ſir! if you have ſo little delicacy, as to treat an affair of ſo ſerious a nature in this manner, I'll be reveng'd on you, by loving another.

CRISPIN.

And who is this other to be?

NERINA.

My huſband.

CRISPIN.

No; there I defy you! but to come to the point: Do you know, that we have but a very little time to be together; for my maſter intends to leave the houſe this very day. Now, in what manner are you willing we ſhould part? Among ſenſible people, there is a certain method of bidding farewel to each other, that leaves only pleaſing ideas behind it. Such a parting, Nerina!——you underſtand me;

ſuch

ſuch a parting would at once puniſh Paſquin for his jealouſy, and comfort me for the vexation of ſeeing myſelf ſupplanted by him. Beſides, you remember the agreement we made a few hours ago; this would be, as it were, a kind of earneſt for the performance of your prōmiſe: and after the trick you have already play'd me, my dear, I think I have a right to inſiſt upon ſome ſecurity, more than bare words.

NERINA.

Mercy upon us! what ſort of a creature do you take me to be?

CRISPIN.

Take you to be? why, I take you to be——a woman.

NERINA.

Away, baſe man! after a propoſal of this nature, I ſhall ſee thee depart without concern.

CRISPIN.

And after ſuch a refuſal, our ſeparation will not kill me.

NERINA.

I'll go find out my huſband, and be reconcil'd to him directly.

CRISPIN.

And I'll ſet out on my travels, and have as many miſtreſſes as I can find handſome chamber-maids.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter LISIMON *and* LICANDER.

LISIMON.

WELL; have you ſeen this widow lady, the duke of Soriento's daughter?

LICANDER.

I have; and after a long converſation, have parted with her full of joy and grief.

LISIMON.

Hey-day! why then we ſhall have you laugh and cry in a breath.

LICANDER.

I am ſenſibly afflicted with the unhappy ſituation of that lady. The loſs of her father, huſband, and brother, has determin'd her to renounce all ſociety, and ſhe is preparing to retire into a convent; nor can any argument of mine diſſuade her from perpetrating this reſolution, which gives me great concern, as I love her with the tenderneſs of a brother: but on the other hand, I am overjoy'd that ſhe has left her whole fortune to Julia.

LISIMON.

To your niece?

LICANDER.

To my niece, if you call her ſo.

LISIMON.

How do you mean, if I call her ſo? I do not underſtand you.

LICANDER.

In a few minutes you'll underſtand me better: In ſhort, Julia is now become a rich heireſs; ſince, as ſhe is not only to enjoy what I am poſſeſs'd of, after my death, but is likewiſe entitled to all this lady's fortune.

LISIMON.

That ſhe ſhould enjoy your fortune after your death, is nothing extraordinary; but I cannot ſee how ſhe can be entitled to the eſtate of the duke of Soriento's daughter: this wants ſome explanation.

LICANDER.

And yet, let me tell you, nothing is more juſt and reaſonable.

LISIMON.

May be ſo; but troth I am not to be eaſily convinc'd of it, as I know Julia is no-way related to her.

LICANDER.

But what would you think, if I could prove to you, that Julia is her neareſt relation.

LISIMON.

Pſha! now you are bantering me. Julia her neareſt relation!

LICANDER.

Moſt certainly; for ſhe is her niece.

LISIMON.

Her niece! why then ſhe muſt be the duke of Soriento's daughter-in-law.

LICANDER.

You are right.

LISIMON.

God forgive me! I believe you're out of your ſenſes.

LICANDER.

Not in the leaſt.

LISIMON.

Why, then, I am! for how the devil can you make me believe, that your brother's daughter——

LICANDER.

There you are miſtaken; for I am not Julia's uncle.

LISIMON.

What! is not ſhe the daughter of the counteſs of Filandiere, who marry'd the pretended baron of St. Aubin for her third huſband?

LICANDER.

No; and to encreaſe your aſtoniſhment, I muſt inform you, that Julia is not my niece, but my daughter; my own daughter.

LISIMON.

Your daughter? why you was never marry'd!

LICANDER.

There I muſt undeceive you again: I was privately marry'd to the duke of Soriento's eldeſt daughter, while I was her father's maſter of the horſe.

LISIMON.

You amaze me!

LICANDER.

Another time you ſhall hear the whole of this ſurpriſing adventure. Altho' a gentleman by birth, I had ſo little pretenſions to the daughter of this nobleman, that we did not even dare to make our marriage known, but kept it a profound ſecret as long as we poſſibly could; but alas! my happineſs laſted no longer than the birth of Julia; my wife dying a few days after ſhe brought her into the world. The grief I felt for this irreparable loſs, together with the apprehenſions I was under, leſt the cauſe of my wife's death ſhould be diſcover'd by her family, who would not fail to ſacrifice me

to

to their reſentment; eſpecially her father and brother, whoſe vindictive tempers I well knew, determin'd me to go to the Indies, after having reveal'd the ſecret of my marriage to my brother and his wife, deſiring them to take charge of my daughter, and bring her up as their own; which was no difficult matter, as they liv'd in a retired country-place, and my ſiſter-in-law was on the point of lying-in. Here, now, is the whole myſtery unravell'd.——

LISIMON.

This affair has all the air of a romance; and if I did not know you for an honeſt man, who would diſdain a falſhood, I ſhould think you was impoſing upon me, by a tale of your own invention.—But ſuppoſing this to be true in all its circumſtances, there is nothing to prevent Julia from marrying Leander.

LICANDER.

Nothing; and I intend to join their hands this very night. I have ſent for Leander's father, and expect him every minute, when we will ſettle the neceſſary preliminaries between us; and I muſt confeſs I feel a ſenſible ſatisfaction in ſurpriſing my old friend in ſo agreeable a manner.

LISIMON.

It is a truly generous action; but we muſt undeceive the young couple, for they are both in deſpair, and preparing to take a final leave of each other.

LICANDER.

That can ſoon be prevented.

LISIMON.

Well, then, we'll have two weddings at once: Leander's with Julia, and my ſon's with Angelica.

LICANDER.

Let us in, then, and prepare matters.

SCENE II.

Enter a SERVANT.

LISIMON.

What is your buſineſs?

SERVANT.

There is a gentleman below, ſir, who ſays he is an old acquaintance of your's, and deſires to ſpeak with you.

LISIMON. [*To* Licander.]

It is Leander's father; join with me in making him welcome. [*To the ſervant.*] Young man, I ſhould be glad if you would let miſs Julia know, that your maſter and I deſire her company here; we have ſome agreeable news to impart to her.

SERVANT.

Sir, miſs Julia has been gone out with her maid above this hour.

LICANDER.

Well, then, be ſure you tell her, as ſoon as ſhe comes in, that I deſire to ſpeak with her.

SERVANT.

I ſhall, ſir. [*Exit* Servant.

SCENE III.

Enter VALERE *and* PASQUIN,

LISIMON.

Oh, your ſervant, ſir! have you done as I order'd you?

VALERE.

What was that, ſir?

LISIMON.

Are you reconcil'd to the counteſs and her daughter?

daughter? and have you ſtrictly obſerv'd the directions I gave you on that head?

VALERE.

The counteſs, ſir, is not here; I have ſeen only Angelica.

LISIMON.

Well; and have you made her your excuſes for the impertinence you was guilty of?

VALERE.

I have, ſir.

LISIMON.

Did ſhe appear ſatisfy'd with them?

VALERE.

Undoubtedly.

LISIMON.

I am not clear in that.

VALERE.

There were a few tears ſhed at firſt. I ſeem'd affected with them. After that, I had recourſe to vows and proteſtations; was inſtantly believ'd, and taken into favour again.

LISIMON.

She's a fool for her pains. Had I been in her place, I ſhould not have forgiven you ſo eaſily.

VALERE.

That would have given me very little concern.

LISIMON.

What an eaſy impudence! One would imagine, that all the merit in the world was center'd in your ſweet perſon: but hark'e, ſir, I would adviſe you to lay aſide that air of ſelf-ſufficiency, and behave like a man of ſenſe; or at leaſt, wear the appearance of one. As ſoon as the counteſs of Pepiniere comes home, your marriage articles ſhall be ſigned.

VALERE.

Fair and ſoftly, if you pleaſe, ſir; I am not yet determin'd.

LISIMON.

Not yet determin'd! I fancy I ſhall find a way to fix your reſolution. To-morrow you ſhall either be marry'd, or diſinherited; ſo take your choice—There is no time to be loſt, I can tell you that.

VALERE.

But ſir, I have a thought come into my head, which you, perhaps, may approve of: You know that Julia——

LISIMON.

What, again! if ever I hear you mention her name to me once more——

LICANDER.

Do not put yourſelf in a paſſion.

LISIMON.

You are in the right; let us leave the room. [*To* Valere.] Well, ſir, you know my mind; and what I have once ſaid, I'll abide by.

[*Exeunt* Liſimon *and* Licander.

SCENE IV.

Enter PASQUIN.

VALERE.

Was ever man ſo unhappy as I am?

PASQUIN.

Was ever ſo wretched a huſband as myſelf?

VALERE.

An unforeſeen obſtacle breaks all my rival's engagements with Julia. I know nothing of the matter; and inſtead of making the moſt of this event, reconcile myſelf to Angelica. How cruel a circumſtance!

PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

True; but what do you think of my caſe? I find a ſtrong inclination to beat my wife; but dare not do it, for fear of people's tongues. I want to knock my rival on the head; and when we come face to face, I prove a greater coward than himſelf.

VALERE. [*Muſing.*]

What ſhall I do? if I was to offer myſelf to Julia, ſhe would certainly prefer me to a convent: but then I ſhould have my father, the counteſs, and Angelica, all upon my back.

PASQUIN. [*To himſelf.*]

If I part from my wife, I ſhall become the jeſt of the town. If I cudgel her as ſhe deſerves, I may kill her. If I kill her, I ſhall be hang'd.

VALERE.

What would you adviſe me to do, Paſquin?

PASQUIN.

What would you adviſe me to do, ſir?

VALERE.

Did not you hear me?

PASQUIN.

No, ſir; what was you ſaying?

VALERE.

I was ſpeaking of Julia.

PASQUIN.

And I of my wife.

VALERE.

Confuſion ſeize the raſcal! what a perplexity am I in!

PASQUIN.

Ah, my poor forehead, how it akes!

VALERE.

You damn'd ſcoundrel! if I hear you ſpeak a word more relating to your wife, I'll break every bone in your ſkin!

PASQUIN.

Very well; be it ſo: I'll ſay nothing more about her; but you cannot hinder me from thinking—— I have a certain ſenſibility that———

VALERE.

Still harping upon the ſame ſtring; will you hold your tongue, or not?

PASQUIN.

Well, well, you'll have a wife yourſelf, ſoon, and then you'll know what it is to——

VALERE. [*Offering to ſtrike him.*]

Hang-dog! will you hear what I have to ſay?

PASQUIN.

I am all attention.

VALERE.

I have fix'd my reſolution: I will not marry Angelica, and yet ſhe ſhall not complain of it; and conſequently my father can have no room to find fault with me.

PASQUIN.

And how do you propoſe to work this miracle?

VALERE. [*Striking his forehead.*]

I have it all here.

PASQUIN.

Oh; then, indeed, it muſt be ſomething more than common.

VALERE.

I'll tell thee: I'll go this inſtant to Angelica, and acquaint her, that my father is reſolv'd we ſhall be marry'd this very night; and that I am ready to ſubmit to his pleaſure.

PASQUIN.

Mighty well.

VALERE.

She will be delighted with the news.

PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

Poſſibly.

VALERE.

The more pleas'd ſhe ſeems with it, the greater indifference I ſhall ſhew. Now, I know ſhe is very nice and haughty. My coldneſs will doubtleſs pique her pride: ſhe will fly out into reproaches; call me baſe and faithleſs man; with all the other pretty invectives that fond woman has recourſe to, when diſappointed in her deſires. I, with a mortifying civility, will attempt to excuſe myſelf to her. This behaviour will redouble her anger againſt me; and in the firſt ſallies of her rage, ſhe will ſwear never to marry me, and the ſcene will end in a formal rupture. My father will fly into a paſſion, at firſt hearing it; but I ſhall ſoon pacify him, by convincing him the fault is not mine. Thus I ſhall get rid of Angelica, and fly to the arms of my charming Julia.

PASQUIN.

Well, I muſt confeſs this is mighty prettily imagin'd.

VALERE.

I am only apprehenſive that Angelica ſhould ſuffer her love for me to get the better of her reſentment.

PASQUIN.

I may, perhaps, be miſtaken; but I cannot help thinking that ſhe ſeems to be very indifferent about you ſince your laſt ſally.

VALERE.

Coxcomb! ſhe loves me only too well, that's all my misfortune. You'll ſee what trouble I ſhall have to rid myſelf of her importunities, and bring her to a ſtate of indifference.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

Here ſhe comes! I am curious to ſee the iſſue of this ſcene.

SCENE V.

Enter ANGELICA.

ANGELICA.

I have been ſeeking you, Valere.

VALERE. [*To* Paſquin, *aſide.*]

You hear ſhe has been ſeeking me; does that look like indifference on her ſide?

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere, *aſide.*]

Patience; and hear her out.

ANGELICA.

I have been maturely conſidering our reconciliation; and I think I perceive more of the impulſe of duty in it, than of love. Am I deceiv'd? or am I not? Own the truth: is your heart wholly mine? or has not Julia ſtill a ſhare in it?

VALERE.

And if unfortunately your ſuſpicions ſhould prove well founded, what would you do in that caſe, madam?

ANGELICA.

I ſhould, in the firſt place, inſiſt upon your owning it to me ſincerely.

VALERE.

And ſuppoſe I did?

ANGELICA.

Why, then I ſhould treat you with all the contempt and indifference you could deſerve.

VALERE.

I cannot believe you.

ANGELICA.

Not believe me?

VALERE.

No; inſtead of that, you would load me with the moſt bitter reproaches; and not only ſo, but complain of me to my father, and then I ſhould be diſinherited.

ANGELICA.

You are much miſtaken, ſir; I have lov'd you too well, ever to do you an injury; and have too great a regard to my own character, to make affairs between us ſo public. Even ſuppoſing we were to break entirely in conſequence of your frank avowal, I would willingly take all your faults to myſelf, both for your intereſt and my own reputation.

VALERE.

You want to draw me into a declaration, but I am not ſuch a novice; my preſent ſituation is too delicate for me to run any riſk, by a too precipitate confeſſion. My father inſiſts upon my marrying you this very night; and ſince he will have it ſo, I am determin'd to comply with his will.

ANGELICA.

Since he will have it ſo.

VALERE.

Do not, therefore, ſay that I make any objections: he is my father; and I am ſenſible of the duty I owe him as a ſon.

ANGELICA.

Well, ſir, I ſhall not put your filial obedience to ſo ſevere a trial; I underſtand you better than you imagine, and am charm'd that I know your mind ſo well: I ſhall immediately go to your father, and tell him, that you have made known his intentions to me, and are ready to ſubmit to them, but that I am not diſpos'd to give my hand to you.

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere, *aside.*]

Did not I tell you, that you would find very little trouble to get rid of her.

SCENE VI.

Enter COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

Rejoice, rejoice, my dear child; I bring thee moſt glorious news! I have juſt gain'd my law-ſuit, and you are now one of the beſt fortunes in our province.

ANGELICA.

If I am rejoic'd, madam, it is more on your account than my own.

COUNTESS.

I have juſt had a very advantageous match propos'd to me, for you, my dear; and if I was not ſo far engag'd with Mr. Liſimon and his ſon, I ſhould be tempted to accept of it. The party who offers, is a very agreeable young man, almoſt as well deſcended as yourſelf; has as handſome a fortune as Mr. Valere, here; and not to do him injuſtice, to the full as good an underſtanding. But once again, I ſay, I am determin'd not to break my word, or put a reſtraint upon your inclinations.

ANGELICA.

The engagements between this gentleman and me, madam, are not ſo ſtrong, but I believe they may be eaſily broken; and as for my inclinations, I have ſo many reaſons to think them ill placed, that I ſhall make no difficulty of recalling them.

COUNTESS.

Are you ſerious, my dear child?

ANGELICA.

I am, I proteſt to you.

COUNTESS.

Why then, mr. Valere, I ſhall take my leave of you: make him a curtſey, make him a curtſey child, and bid him farewell once for all: And ſo now, my good ſelf-ſufficient ſir, you may diſpoſe of your little merit as well as you can, and may reſt aſſured we ſhall not bid againſt it. Your ſervant, your ſervant. [*Exeunt* Counteſs *and* Angelica.

SCENE VII.

PASQUIN.

Well, well, you are rid of Angelica, or more properly ſpeaking, ſhe has rid herſelf of you; what think you of your great power over her heart? In my opinion it is but very feeble.

VALERE.

I muſt confeſs my pride is furiouſly mortified, and if I was not ſo enamour'd of Julia, I would ſoon bring Angelica to; but the loſs of her gives me very little uneaſineſs, and I am ſo full of my new paſſion, that I have not leiſure to be offended at the ſlight ſhe has put upon me.

PASQUIN.

But if Julia ſhould treat you as cavalierly, what opinion would you then have of your boaſted merit? Would you not be apt to think you had ſomewhat over rated it?

VALERE.

'Sdeath blockhead! have you the inſolence to ſuppoſe that I can fail with Julia, when ſhe can no longer hope for Leander?

PASQUIN.

Why, upon my ſoul ſuch a thing may happen.

VALERE.

May happen! pretty enough that! What, do you think ſhe is blind?

PASQUIN.

No faith, I am afraid ſhe's too clear ſighted.

VALERE.

Zounds! the raſcal affects to be witty! Hark ye mr. impertinence, if I take you in hand I ſhall change your note.——But a propos here comes Julia.

PASQUIN.

Then, I will retire.

VALERE.

No, ſir; I deſire you will ſtay here. I am willing to convince you by ocular demonſtration, how quickly I can ſubdue a heart, that I once think worth my while to lay ſiege to.

PASQUIN.

Very well ſir, begin the attack, and I'll aſſiſt as volunteer.

SCENE VIII.

Enter JULIA *and* NERINA.

JULIA.

Nerina, enquire if my uncle is come back yet.

NERINA.

The ſervants told me he was come in, madam, and that he was in private converſation with Leander's father.

JULIA.

I will go to him then; for I am all impatience to let him know my determination, and to gain his conſent.

VALERE.

May I ask what that determination is, madam?

JULIA.

You may ſir, and I will inform you that it is to retire to a convent, and there end my days.

VALERE.

Retire to a convent? Piſh! You can never have formed ſo prepoſterous a deſign.

NERINA.

Indeed! indeed! madam, you are going to do a very ſilly thing. Conſider you cannot leave your heart behind you, tho' you ſhut up your perſon; this heart is a woman's, in which there will always be the leaven of change, and fickleneſs; this leaven will ſoon corrupt your fine reſolutions, give you a diſtaſte to ſolitude, make you repent having left the world, and earneſtly wiſh to return to it again. You was paſſionately fond of Leander, he was to have been your huſband; but an unforeſeen obſtacle prevented your union. Now, becauſe he has been ſilly enough to marry your mother, would you be ſo mad as to die a maid? In troth I don't think men are ſo very ſcarce or valuable, that a woman ſhould renounce all the pleaſures of life, becauſe ſhe has been diſappointed in one lover. Body o'me, you could do no more if the whole ſpecies was extinct.

JULIA.

The girl has certainly loſt her ſenſes.

NERINA.

Nay, I think it is you have loſt your ſenſes. See how the young widows now-a-days behave, do they run and bury themſelves alive in a convent, when they loſe their huſbands? No, they weep, they tear their hair, they faint, they ſwear to renounce mankind for ever; but all this buſtle is only for faſhion ſake, and the pretty creatures lay aſide

their

their ſorrow almoſt as ſoon as they put on their weeds.

JULIA.

A curious panegyric on female conſtancy!

NERINA.

In ſhort, madam, take my advice, begin to weep, lament, and take on for the loſs of your lover, as ſoon as you pleaſe; but ere long, you'll find the heart of woman is made to entertain more than one gueſt, and that dear variety is its darling object.

VALERE.

Nerina is certaily right, and I am convinc'd that you have too much good ſenſe and diſcernment, not to know that there may be another man in the world, capable of comforting you for the loſs of Leander.

JULIA.

And who is this man?

VALERE.

Cannot you gueſs?

JULIA.

Indeed no.

VALERE.

Suppoſe myſelf.

PASQUIN. [*Aſide.*]

So! we have open'd the trenches, but I dread a vigorous ſally.

JULIA.

You, ſir!

VALERE.

I flatter myſelf it may.

JULIA.

Then you greatly deceive yourſelf. I would have a huſband whom I could love, and by whom I was belov'd; now Leander is the only man, I bluſh not to declare it, with whom I could promiſe myſelf that happineſs. As to you, ſir, I muſt tell you freely, that I ſhould apprehend a different deſtiny, was I your wife; you have too great an affection for yourſelf, to love any one elſe.

VALERE.

I ſwear, I vow, I bind myſelf by the moſt ſacred oaths, that you ſhall be the only object of my future paſſion. Yes, adorable Julia! I now ſpeak what my heart dictates to me; a heart that takes pleaſure in the ſacrifice it makes you of a former flame, and rejects, with indignation, the power that Angelica had once over it.

JULIA.

And my heart, ſir, as readily anſwers, that it is too delicate and equitable to accept the vows of one falſe to a former love. If I had no other fault to find with you but inconſtancy, that alone would be ſufficient for me to deſpiſe the offer you make me.

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere, *Aſide.*]

Well ſir, what think you? This ſame ſiege is like to prove a tough one.

VALERE.

Madam, I can forgive theſe firſt ſallies of a diſappointed love, but when the neceſſary tribute has been paid to decorum, you will do me more juſtice; take time to reflect.

JULIA.

As to me, ſir, I ſolemnly declare, that the more I reflect on your ſubject, the leſs diſpoſed I ſhall be to accept of your conſolation. Follow me, Nerina, I'll to my uncle, and take my leave this inſtant.

PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

This ſame heart, ſir, ſeems impregnable. I am afraid we muſt be obliged to raiſe the ſiege.

SCENE IX.

Enter LEANDER *and* CRISPIN.

JULIA.

Leander, what want you here? have I not forbidden you to appear before me again? Do you come to renew my grief? Can you take a barbarous pleaſure in beholding my anguiſh?

LEANDER.

No, madam, do me not ſo much injuſtice. Your grief is too much my own, for me to ſeek to augment it. I only come to deſire, that, if you ever lov'd me with the tenderneſs you have expreſſed; or have yet any remains of affection for me, you would grant me one proof that I have to require of you.

JULIA.

Alas! what further proof can you deſire?

LEANDER.

It is, that you will lay aſide your intention of retiring from the world: that you will tear me from your heart, and reſerve the poſſeſſion of it for ſome more happy and deſerving man.

JULIA.

You require an impoſſibility! and I beſeech heaven to puniſh me in the moſt exemplary manner, if ever I am any one's but your's.

PASQUIN. [*To* Valere, *aſide.*]

There is our diſmiſſion in form; we had beſt retire.

VALERE.

VALERE.

Paſquin, follow me. Madam, this is too great an inſult for me to put up with; you will repent your raſhneſs, you will, believe me; but it will be too late, I aſſure you: you muſt never expect to hear from me again.

[*Exit* Valere *and* Paſquin.]

SCENE X.

LEANDER. [*To* Criſpin.]

Have you got every thing ready for my ſetting out?

CRISPIN.

Yes, ſir; our horſes are ſaddled and bridled; but I don't think we need be in a hurry.

LEANDER.

And pray, good wiſe ſir, on what may you found that conjecture?

CRISPIN.

From a converſation I overheard juſt now.

JULIA.

A converſation! between whom?

CRISPIN.

Between my maſter's father, the gentleman of the houſe, and your uncle; who was telling them moſt marvellous things relating to you. I heard all without being ſeen.

JULIA.

Well, but what was it concerning?

CRISPIN.

Oh, ſomething that will amaze you! In the firſt place, your uncle ſaid, that——he was your uncle.

LEANDER.

Raſcal! are you making a jeſt of us?

CRISPIN.

CRISPIN.

Will you let me go on?

JULIA.

Well, well, proceed.

CRISPIN.

As I was ſaying, he is your uncle; but, your uncle in ſuch a manner, that, as a body may ſay—you underſtand me; by means of a great Italian nobleman who liv'd at Paris, and whoſe maſter of the horſe he was—Stay! I am wrong—The nobleman I am ſpeaking of had two daughters; the one was marry'd; the other was not. She who was marry'd——had a huſband, as you may ſuppoſe; but ſhe who was ſingle, had one likewiſe, without any one knowing it, by happening to take your uncle's fancy. Now, it ſo fell out, that, that your uncle and your father were marry'd privately: by which means your aunt happens to be your mother——becauſe your firſt mother, who was not your aunt, happen'd to deceaſe by death: and this is the very reaſon which makes me think that we need not ſet out.

NERINA.

A very extraordinary ſtory, this!

CRISPIN.

You underſtand me now, don't you?

LEANDER.

I wiſh I may die, if I can comprehend a ſyllable of what he has ſaid.

CRISPIN.

Upon my ſoul, nor I myſelf! It is a deviliſh confus'd affair. I really thought it would have turn'd my brain. But, hold! theſe gentlemen here will explain it to you at once.

SCENE

SCENE XI.

Enter LISIMON *and* LICANDER.

LISIMON.

Nothing, now, can prevent your putting the finiſhing hand to this buſineſs.

LICANDER.

I am rejoic'd, children, to find you together.

JULIA.

Alas, ſir! it will not be long. This is the laſt conference we ſhall ever have. You are, doubtleſs, acquainted with the cruel misfortune——

LICANDER.

Yes, I know the whole ſtory.

LEANDER.

I waited your coming, ſir, to take my final leave of you.

JULIA. [*Kneeling to* Licander.]

I have now only one favour to requeſt of you, my deareſt uncle; which is, not to engage my hand to any other perſon; but to permit me to retire to a convent.

LICANDER.

To a convent! no, no, I'll never ſuffer that: you ſhall live with me, and be the comfort of my old age.

NERINA.

I am rais'd from the dead!

LEANDER.

It is my parting requeſt, ſir, that you will perſiſt in that reſolution.

LICANDER.

I undoubtedly ſhall; you may depend upon it: nay more, I intend to provide a huſband for her.

JULIA.

A huſband for me?

LICANDER.

Moſt certainly, my dear niece; and this very night.

LEANDER.

For heaven's ſake, ſir, do not offer ſo cruel a violence to her inclinations; it will be ſufficient, that——

LICANDER.

Very well, ſir; but do you know that I have provided a wife for you too.

LEANDER.

A wife for me?

LICANDER.

Yes, for you! This gentleman and I have ſettled the affair between us.

NERINA. [*Aſide.*]

Ha! ha! I find how it is to be. They are going to give Angelica to him, and Valere is to have my miſtreſs.

JULIA.

If theſe are your intentions, ſir, you will force me to the diſagreeable neceſſity of being ungrateful, and of diſobeying you.

LICANDER.

No, Julia, you will prove neither ungrateful nor diſobedient: on the contrary, you will joyfully receive the perſon I deſign for you.

LEANDER.

Good heavens! who can this be?

LICANDER.

Yourſelf.

LEANDER.

Me?

NERINA.

Hey day! the ſcene is chang'd!

JULIA.

Leander my huſband!

LICANDER.

Unleſs you rather chuſe to retire to a convent.

JULIA.

Moſt certainly no; but how I can ever become the wife of my father-in-law!

LICANDER.

Make yourſelf eaſy: he is no longer ſo.

LEANDER.

Amazement!

JULIA.

How! was not the baroneſs of St. Aubin my mother?

LICANDER.

No, as ſure as that you are my daughter.

JULIA.

Your daughter!

LICANDER.

Yes, my deareſt Julia! in me you behold the perſon who gave you life.

JULIA.

I might indeed have known it, from that tenderneſs with which you have always treated me.

CRISPIN.

Did not I tell you, that this gentleman, your uncle, had been privately marry'd to the good lady your mother.

LEANDER.

I can hardly credit what I hear! and dread being deceiv'd!

LICANDER.

Recover from your aſtoniſhment, Leander, and depend upon what I ſay to be undoubted fact. I can quickly convince you of it by the recital of my adventures. For the preſent, it is ſufficient to inform you that Julia is my daughter; that you was never marry'd to her mother: and that the obſtacle, which has caus'd ſo much affliction to both, was wholly imaginary, and will in no wiſe obſtruct your mutual happineſs.

CRISPIN. [*Aſide.*]

Is not this word for word as I ſaid?

JULIA.

How ſhall I ſupport this joyful tranſition?

LEANDER.

My aſtoniſhment! my joy!——Oh, Julia! I have loſt the power of utterance!

LISIMON.

This tender confuſion is more eloquent than any thing you could have ſaid. We can eaſily gueſs what paſſes in your heart.

LICANDER.

Let us in, and ſend for a notary.

LISIMON.

And we will celebrate two marriages at once; that of Leander with Julia, and of my ſon with Angelica.

SCENE

SCENE XII.

Enter PASQUIN, *out of breath.*

PASQUIN.

Oh, ſir! I'm come to tell you the ſtrangeſt news!

LISIMON.

What's the matter? ſpeak.

PASQUIN.

Your ſon, ſir!

LISIMON.

My ſon! what of him?

PASQUIN.

Is gone, ſir!

LISIMON.

Gone! whither?

PASQUIN.

Lord, ſir! he don't know, nor I neither; but, being in deſpair at having left madam Angelica the ſecond time, for love of this lady here, who, after all, would not liſten to his addreſſes, he came juſt now to tell me that he was reſolv'd to go abroad, ſo far—ſo far, that you ſhould never hear of him again.

LISIMON.

Unhappy wretch! I am ſorry this incident has troubled the general ſatisfaction: but, however diſagreeable it may be to me as a parent, I am reſolv'd that it ſhall not hinder me from attending to the neceſſary preparations for the union of this couple.

LICANDER.

We are infinitely oblig'd to you for this kind attention: but theſe preparations ſhall not hinder us from doing our utmoſt endeavours to reconcile

Valere to you; and, if poſſible, to prevail on Angelica to receive his hand.

LISIMON.

Let us in then. To your endeavours I'll join my own, notwithſtanding he is ſo little deſerving of it. [*Exeunt* Licander, Liſimon, Leander, *and* Julia.]

SCENE the Laſt.

CRISPIN.

So! my maſter's provided for: as to me, I ſhall look out for ſome pretty, tight wench, that's likely to be a good breeder, and link myſelf to her for life; for I ſhould look upon myſelf as anſwerable for ſuffering the race of the Criſpins to fail. Come, Paſquin, let you and I be friends. I leave you in poſſeſſion of the premiſſes, [*Pointing to* Nerina.] and promiſe, for the future, never to treſpaſs on your ground.

NERINA.

And, if you will promiſe to lay aſide your ſilly jealouſy, I'll ceaſe to look upon you as a huſband, and your treatment will be the better for it.

PASQUIN.

Give me thy hand upon the ſame. I am now fully convinc'd, that he who takes a wife, in this refin'd age, ſhould determine to ſee all, and ſay nothing. [*Exeunt.*]

The END.

THE

SISTERS.

A COMEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HEATFREE.
The MARQUIS.
The COUNT.
Mr. NEWLAND.
DORIMANT.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.
SOPHIA.
PULCHERIA.
LISETTA.

Scene, Mrs. HAUGHTY's Houſe.

THE SISTERS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

HEARTFREE *and* LISETTA *meeting.*

LISETTA.

BLESS me! who do I ſee? Mr. Heartfree in town?

HEARTFREE.

Yes, Liſetta, it is even ſo; my good nature has got the better of my inclination, and the inviting beauty of the ſeaſon: the regard I ſtill have for this ſiſter of mine, (notwithſtanding the many pranks ſhe has play'd me) and the intereſt I take in every thing that concerns her, has determined me to quit my agreeable retreat in Champaigne, and once more viſit Paris. I cannot help conſidering her daughters as my neices, and earneſtly wiſh

to see them well settled in the world, especially the eldest, who still remains unmarried, tho' she is now on the wrong side of twenty, a time of life, you know, Lisetta, at which every young woman is desirous of a husband.

LISETTA.

Ah! lord help me, I am a living witness of the truth of that observation; I have my longings and my wants.

HEARTFREE.

Yes, yes, they are plainly to be read in your eyes, hussy; but come, how fares it with my dear Sophia?

LISETTA.

Ah, sir! she's the darling of your heart.

HEARTFREE.

Why, I must acknowledge, Lisetta, that she is my favourite, and well she deserves it; she is a prodigy of wit and understanding, and the most compliable creature living; and then, with an inexhaustible fund of good nature, she is mistress of the most exalted prudence and exquisite discernment: in short, my Sophia wants only a little more beauty to be the most perfect of her sex, and the admiration of all mankind; but in this preverse and iniquitous age, nothing will please but outside, and so depraved is the taste of the present times, that we sacrifice every rational consideration to form and features.

LISETTA.

Very true inded sir, Lord help us! nothing is minded now-a-days but a fine face.

HEARTFREE.

But is it not a shame that so much merit should be disregarded! and that the amiable Sophia shou'd be neglected for her sister, who has nothing to recommend

mend her but a bewitching ſet of features, and who mars the gifts that nature has laviſhed on her perſon, by her inſufferable pride and vanity! Why, I warrant ſhe would turn up her noſe even at a prince, if he was at her feet.

LISETTA.

And then, ſir, what is worſe than all the reſt, her fool of a mother (pardon me, ſir, for the freedom I take with your ſiſter) makes a perfect goddeſs of her; ſhe may ſay and do juſt as ſhe pleaſes, and inſtead of checking her for her pride, the old lady ſeems delighted with her for it, while the meek and modeſt miſs Sophia is continually feeling the effects of her ill humour and averſion, and is ſcolded and ſnubbed at every turn, as if ſhe was not worthy to wipe her ſiſter's ſhoes. In ſhort, my heart's ready to break, when I think how that dear young lady is treated by them.

HEARTFREE. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Poor Sophia! well, but how does ſhe bear all this?

LISETTA.

Why, ſir, with a patience beyond belief, and which, for my part, I think ſhe carries too far: with a view, I ſuppoſe, to conceal what ſhe ſuffers from the eyes of the world; but I, who know all that paſſes in her heart, can plainly diſcover, that this affected calmneſs covers the moſt better uneaſineſs.

HEARTFREE.

This is the caſe in many a family beſides our's; one daughter is idoliz'd, while the other has her fortune and peace of mind ſacrificed to a favourite ſiſter. I'll take care however this ſhall not happen at our houſe; my poor niece ſhall be no longer made miſerable by any one. Go, Liſetta, go this inſtant,

and ſend Sophia to me; tell the dear child, I wait with impatience to ſee her.——Very pretty doings indeed!

LISETTA.

Oh, ſir! here my young lady comes.

SCENE II.

Enter SOPHIA.

HEARTFREE. [*Running, and catching her in his arms.*] My deareſt Sophia, let me embrace thee! hark'e me, girl, thy mother is a wrong-headed woman, and I, like a good brother, am reſolved to ſet her right.

LISETTA.

Ah! Lord help me, ſir, you have undertaken a difficult taſk, I wiſh you may able to accompliſh it.

SOPHIA.

Silence, Liſetta, or learn to ſpeak more reſpectfully of my mother; I muſt not hear her treated in this manner. Is ſhe to blame if my ſiſter has been ſo happy, as to render herſelf more agreeable to her than me? or ſhall I condemn that as partiality in her, which is no other than the pure effects of maternal tenderneſs? Beſides, does not every one ſeem to applaud the preference ſhe ſhews to my ſiſter, by their behaviour to us? don't you ſee that every creature who viſits here, pays the greateſt court to my ſiſter, while they hardly take any notice of me, or at moſt treat me with a cold civility? to what end then ſhould I aſſert my right of elderſhip? I am ſenſible that I am born to paſs my days in obſcurity, and am therefore reſolved, without the leaſt pique or reſentment, to ſubmit to my fate, and implicitly obey the will of heaven.

HEARTFREE.

HEARTFREE.

The will of heaven, quoth'a! will you go about to perſuade me that it is the will of heaven, that a mother ſhould abandon herſelf to the dictates of a blind partiality, and while ſhe laviſhes all her fondneſs upon one child, exerciſe her authority over the other, only to make her miſerable? No, no, Sophia, I will never ſuffer ſo unjuſt a proceeding. Beauty is at beſt but a frail advantage; a periſhable treaſure, which may ſtrike us with admiration for a while, but preſently loſes its force.——The gifts of the mind, the gifts of the mind, my girl, and a ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, are ſuperior to all the graces of the perſon; and as their power is founded in reaſon, it will always laſt, and inſpire unalterable eſteem. It is by theſe qualifications thou haſt endeared thyſelf to me; they may talk of thy ſiſter as they pleaſe, I care not; the arguments thou uſeſt to excuſe thy mother's conduct, ſhews the goodneſs of thy heart, but it only ſerves to make me more angry with her, who can be blind to ſo much merit. —— I am determined to get thee a good huſband out of hand; to night before to-morrow, if poſſible.

SOPHIA.

Dear ſir, there is no occaſion for ſo much haſte.

LISETTA.

Indeed, madam, but I think there is.

HEARTFREE.

It is a buſineſs that I have ſet my heart upon, and I will go this inſtant.

SOPHIA.

Your goodneſs to me, ſir, will only ſerve to add to my ſufferings. Dear ſir, let me beg of you to take notice of my ſiſter, appear deſirous to ſee her well

provided for. I am ſure that is the beſt way to ſucceed.

LISETTA.

I believe you are right in that, madam, but then you know your lady ſiſter, who, if poſſible, is ſtill vainer than her mother, will hear of nothing under the title of a dutcheſs forſooth.

HEARTFREE.

Of a dutcheſs!

LISETTA.

Yes indeed, ſir. Nay, I aſſure you ſhe even entertains views of being a princeſs, and ſo far is ſhe from making any ſecret of this ridiculous piece of vanity, that ſhe is for ever talking of it. I know above twenty perſons that ſhe has mentioned it to.

HEARTFREE.

Very fine indeed! I fancy, my noble princeſs, I ſhall give you ſuch a leſſon, as will make you lower your topſails a little.

SOPHIA.

For heaven's ſake, moderate your paſſion, dear uncle.

HEARTFREE.

Let me alone, Sophia, I will not be at the trouble of coming all this way for nothing—The more I hear, the more I am confounded and aſhamed! however, I fancy I ſhall find a way to put a ſtop to all theſe extravagances. I am the head of the family, I think, and as ſuch have a right to uſe my authority with both mother and daughter. A niece of mine pretend to be a princeſs indeed!

SCENE

SCENE III.

Mrs. HAUGHTY *appears at one ſide of the ſtage, who liſtens to the laſt part of this ſpeech, and then enters in a paſſion.*

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Hey day! what's here to do! pray, ſir, what are you interfering with?

HEARTFREE.

Mighty well! this is a curious beginning. Hark'e ſiſter of mine. [*Angrily.*]

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Well, brother of mine. [*In the ſame tone.*]

HEARTFREE.

Why, you carry it with a high hand methinks.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

I carry it as I ought.

HEARTFREE.

Zounds! madam, is this the manner you behave in to———

SOPHIA. [*Aſide to* Liſetta.]

Oh! heavens! they will quarrel.

HEARTFREE. [*To* Mrs. Haughty.]

Silence, madam, I will be heard.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

And I will be heard too; ſir. What, are you come out of the country to act the lord paramount in my houſe?

HEARTFREE.

If I am not maſter here already, madam, I intend to be ſo.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Well, we ſhall ſee that.

HEARTFREE.

Yes, madam, and very ſoon too; unleſs you mend your conduct greatly, I know how to make you ſmart for your ridiculous vanity; I would not have you imagine that I come here to pay my court to your idol.

Mrs. HAUGHY.

My idol, ſir!

HEARTFREE.

Yes, ſiſter, your idol. Don't think to brow-beat me; or you will have reaſon to repent it, let me tell you; I muſt teach you that a prudent mother ought always to divide her affections equally.

SOPHIA.

Dear ſir, let me deſire you———

HEARTFREE. [*To* Sophia.]

Hold your tongue, child. [*To* Mrs. Haughty.] I deſire you would mend your behaviour, or——

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*To* Sophia.]

I am finely leſſon'd here upon your account, methinks!

SOPHIA.

Upon my account, madam?

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Yes, upon your account miſs!

HEARTFREE.

No ſuch thing, no ſuch thing, you may thank yourſelf for it, ſiſter.——What, have you quite forgot that you are her mother?

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Would I could!

SOPHIA. [*Mildly.*]

Alas! why, dear madam? what have I done to diſpleaſe you?

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*Turning from her.*]

No matter; you do diſpleaſe me, and that's ſufficient.

HEARTFREE.

Oh! ay; that is a mighty good reaſon, to be ſure.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

It is ſo.

HEARTFREE.

Heark'e, ſiſter; a word with you, if you pleaſe.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Well; I hear you, ſir.

HEARTFREE.

I find that Pulcheria has taken poſſeſſion of your whole heart; and that there is no place left in it for her lovely ſiſter———

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*Scornfully.*]

Her lovely ſiſter, indeed!

HEARTFREE.

Yes; her lovely ſiſter I ſay, once more!

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*Sneeringly.*]

Oh, to be ſure, ſir! you are quite in the right! every creature admires her!

HEARTFREE.

If they do not, they ought; her ſiſter is handſomer, perhaps, and ſo may have a greater number of admirers; but ſhall I tell you the reaſon? it is becauſe there are more fools than wiſe men, that's the whole of it: and moſt of your viſitors who come to pay their court here, are of that ſtamp. But as to me, I am an admirer of good ſenſe, and can perceive Sophia's merit in its full force, and

value

value her for her wit, underſtanding, virtue, and goodneſs of heart; and therefore do, from this moment, adopt her for my daughter, and leave her ſiſter entirely to you: Make a dutcheſs of her, you have my conſent; nay, you may make her a princeſs, if you pleaſe: but as to Sophia, I take her for mine, and demand her fortune out of your hands, to which I am reſolv'd to add the whole of mine.

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*Amaz'd.*]

The whole of your's, brother!

HEARTFREE.

Yes, ſiſter; I mean to ſupply the place of a father to her, and ſee her well ſettled; and that as ſoon as poſſible too, I can aſſure you.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

And can you be ſo unkind to poor Pulcheria?

HEARTFREE.

Nay, nay, ſiſter, I only diſpoſe of my eſtate, as you do of your affections. However, to convince you of my regard to juſtice, I am not ſo fix'd in my reſolution, but that it is in your power to alter it. I will give you time to recall your reaſon: get Pulcheria a huſband this very day. Out of regard to you, I am willing that ſhe ſhall have the preference of her elder ſiſter; but obſerve what I ſay, if ſhe does not this very day make choice of ſome one of the fools who are dangling after her, to-morrow I will make over my whole eſtate to Sophia, and by this means give her a fortune equal to her merit. Do you hear this, ſiſter of mine? I have ſaid the word; ſo now act as you pleaſe.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

I will go and ſpeak to Pulcheria, and be with you again preſently.

HEARTFREE.

HEARTFREE.

Diſpatch, then, and bring me back her anſwer; and according as that is, I ſhall inſtantly determine. [*Exit* Mrs. Haughty.

HEARTFREE.

Well, I think I have humbled her pride at laſt; and now we ſhall ſee———

SCENE IV.

Enter DORIMANT, *as not ſeeing them. He walks affectedly up to the glaſs, where he admires himſelf, and adjuſts his dreſs.*]

Hey-day! what powder-monkey have we here?

LISETTA.

Oh, ſir, this is one of your fair niece's adorers. A mere fop! a fribble!

HEARTFREE.

What an affected puppy it is!

LISETTA.

A mere piece of clock-work! his wit and his perſon are both ſquar'd by the niceſt rules of art; and move to exact time and meaſure. He is now buſy'd in ſetting his hair in order: when that is done, he will ſtudy his air and addreſs.

HEARTFREE.

The coxcomb!

SOPHIA.

When he is quite ſet in order, he will perhaps do us the honour to take notice of us.

LISETTA.

You muſt know, he is juſt come to the poſſeſſion of a large eſtate, left him by his father and uncle. He is as rich as Crœſus, and as handſome as Adonis, if you will take his own word for it. He

now

now ſighs for the fair Pulcheria, and has the vanity to think ſhe admires him; when, heaven knows, ſhe hardly deigns him a ſingle look.

SOPHIA.

Why, he certainly does not ſee us, Liſetta.

LISETTA.

Dear, madam, are you ſurpriz'd at that? he is too much engag'd with his own ſweet perſon, to have eyes for any one elſe.

HEARTFREE.

See! he begins to move.

SOPHIA.

I wonder if he will vouchſafe me the honour of a word.

SCENE V.

DORIMANT. [*After having adjuſted his dreſs, comes a little forward, without obſerving* Heartfree *and* Sophia.]

DORIMANT.

Liſetta; a word with you.

LISETTA.

With me, ſir!

DORIMANT.

Yes, child, with you——Is the fair Pulcheria to be ſeen?

LISETTA.

She is with her mother, ſir.

DORIMANT.

Do they admit company?

LISETTA.

I believe ſo, ſir.

DORIMANT.

Oh, very well; I will wait upon them, then. [*Is going out, and returns.*] Heark'e, Liſetta; have I been enquir'd for?

LISETTA.

No, ſir, I really have not heard them enquire for any-body; neither do I believe they wiſh for any one's company.

DORIMANT.

Not wiſh for any one, child? why, you ſurprize me! I thought my company might have been wiſh'd for, at leaſt!

LISETTA.

May be ſo, ſir; but I am afraid, if you thought ſo, you flatter'd yourſelf.

DORIMANT.

Flatter'd myſelf? very pretty, that! flatter'd myſelf!

LISETTA.

Moſt certainly, ſir.

DORIMANT.

A mighty ſilly wench, this! Why, do you know, mrs. Abigail, that I would bett any odds, my preſence is moſt ardently deſired this very inſtant?

HEARTFREE. [*To* Sophia, *aſide.*]

What a puppy 'tis! will he favour us with a look, think you?

DORIMANT. [*To* Liſetta.]

What man is that?

LISETTA.

Mr. Heartfree, ſir; my old lady's brother.

DORIMANT.

A country 'ſquire, I ſuppoſe; he has the air of one, at leaſt.

LISETTA.

LISETTA.

Dear ſir, ſpeak ſoftly; the gentleman will certainly hear you.

DORIMANT.

Poſſibly—ſo much the worſe for him——And that youg woman; is not ſhe Pulcheria's ſiſter?

LISETTA.

To be ſure, ſir.

DORIMANT. [*Taking ſnuff.*]

I'm the lady's very humble ſervant.

LISETTA.

Would you ſpeak to her, ſir?

DORIMANT.

Who I, child? lard, I have nothing to ſay to her! nothing in the world: make my compliments to her, however; d'ye hear?

[*Exit; bowing coldly to* Sophia.

SCENE VI.

LISETTA.

Now am I ready to die with vexation, at this fellow's inſolent contempt of you!

SOPHIA.

And I laugh at it.

LISETTA.

Laugh at it!

SOPHIA.

Laugh at it, Liſetta!

LISETTA.

But madam——

SOPHIA.

Pr'ythee, girl, would'ſt thou have me vex myſelf, becauſe another, by her ſuperior charms, makes

makes a conqueſt of all the fops in Paris? If the magic of her eyes is ſuch, as to ſubdue the moſt noble and generous of mankind; is it to be wonder'd that they triumph over ſuch giddy, thoughtleſs creatures as theſe? Beauty will ſtill aſſert its right; and it is my buſineſs to ſubmit to the will of nature. My ſiſter at preſent eclipſes me, it is true; my weak charms fade, and ſicken in the preſence of her's: but a time will perhaps come, when underſtanding and good ſenſe ſhall take their turns to reign; and when once my ſiſter has left this houſe, ſome generous mind, of the ſame caſt with my own, may feel that for me by reflection, which is now paid to her thro' blind paſſion Let us have patience, then, Liſetta; Pulcheria muſt one day be a wife: and the inſtant the dreadful *Yes* has paſſed her lips, farewell to all her boaſted power! her reign will then be at an end; and mine, I hope, will begin.

HEARTFREE. [*Embracing her.*]

Spoke like an angel, my girl! you make me perfectly in love with you. But now, Sophia, unburthen thy poor heart to thy uncle: do; there's my good girl. Tell me; has not ſome one found the way to gain thy affections? ſpeak the truth boldly: I know Liſetta is thy confidant; let me be ſo too.

SOPHIA.

If I muſt own the truth, ſir, there is a perſon in the world who has gain'd my heart.

HEARTFREE.

Is there ſo? adad I am glad of it; heartily glad of it: and yet I don't know why. But I have ſome doubts and fears about me; ha, Sophia!

SOPHIA.

On what account, dear ſir?

HEARTFREE.

Why, I don't know, I ſay—I can't tell——But yet, methinks, I am afraid, leſt thy ſiſter ſhould have robb'd thee of the heart of him thou art fond of. He might, you know, my dear girl, be like the reſt of his ſex; blind, whimſical, and fantaſtical, or——But tell me, doſt thou think he has a paſſion for her?

SOPHIA.

Alas! it is but too certain.

HEARTFREE. [*Angrily.*]

'Sblood! what a bewitching baggage it is——

SOPHIA.

Liſetta knows it as well as myſelf.

LISETTA.

Yes, yes, I know it well enough; it was but yeſterday that I had a provoking proof of it——I took an opportunity, you muſt know, ſir, when I met him by himſelf, of ſpeaking of my young lady, here, in the manner that I think ſhe deſerves; and what I ſaid, ſeem'd to make a great impreſſion on him. But alas! the tables were ſoon turn'd; for juſt as he was beginning to launch forth in her praiſes, in came her ſiſter, and then 'twas all over. Our warm lover no ſooner caſt his eyes upon her, than he flew to her; and would not ſo much as ſtay to hear me ſay a word more.

HEARTFREE. [*In a paſſion.*]

The ſorcereſs! ſhe ſhall leave this houſe inſtantly. This is a ſevere trial to thy tender heart, my Sophia! But tell me; who is this too happy, ungrateful lover? Is it the counſellor?——or the other fellow——the civet cat we ſaw here juſt now?——

SOPHIA.

Sir! heaven's preſerve me from ſuch a wretch!

No,

No, ſir; it muſt be a more worthy object—for whom my heart———

HEARTFREE.

Why thou haſt already prepoſſeſs'd me in his favour! Pr'ythee, what's his name?

SOPHIA.

You know him, ſir.

HEARTFREE.

I know him! who is it?——

SOPHIA.

The marquis of Bellfond, ſir.

HEARTFREE. [*Dancing.*]

Tol lol de lol. The marquis of Bellfond?

SOPHIA.

The ſame.

HEARTFREE.

Well; I never was more pleas'd in all my life. Why I have done thy buſineſs, girl, without knowing it!

SOPHIA.

How, dear ſir?

HEARTFREE.

How? why the marquis is my intimate friend.

LISETTA.

Ay; this is as it ſhould be.

HEARTFREE.

My neighbour!

LISETTA.

Better ſtill.

HEARTFREE.

You muſt underſtand, that knowing his merit, and the many excellent qualifications he is endow'd with, I have for ſome time caſt my eyes upon him, as a perſon, whoſe alliance could not but do us the greateſt

greateſt honour: and in ſhort, Sophia, I have actually propoſed thee to him.

SOPHIA. [*Impatiently.*]

Well, dear ſir—and how—what did he ſay?

HEARTFREE.

Nothing.

LISETTA.

A very obliging anſwer, truly!

HEARTFREE.

But I ſee into the bottom of all this: that ſlut thy ſiſter has bewitch'd him; and being in ſome doubt of the ſucceſs of his paſſion, and perhaps not quite diſpleas'd with my propoſal, he has a mind to ſhelter himſelf behind a cold complaiſance, ſo as to be at liberty to act as circumſtances may turn out.

LISETTA.

It may be ſo, indeed.

HEARTFREE.

However, this will ſoon be clear'd up; your ſiſter, you know, muſt determine one way or another this very night: if ſhe takes the marquis, well and good; we ſhall find ſomebody elſe to ſupply his place.

SOPHIA.

Excuſe me, dear ſir, if my intentions differ from your's; but I am determin'd, if I cannot have the marquis, to retire for ever from the world, and paſs the remainder of my life in a convent.

HEARTFREE.

Fair and ſoftly, niece; you ſeem rather too haſty in your reſolves: young women often find themſelves miſerably deceiv'd in a choice of this ſort.

SOPHIA.

Pardon, ſir, this frank and open avowal; but I look

look upon the marquis in ſo exalted a light, that no one muſt ever hope to ſucceed him in my heart.

LISETTA.

To be ſure he is the moſt accompliſh'd young gentleman in France, and the only one that I know deſerving of ſuch an exceſs of tenderneſs; but, after all, I think ———

HEARTFREE. [*Seeing* Newland, *who appears at the farther end of the ſtage.*]

What man is that?

LISETTA.

Oh, ſir, he's another of our ſighing ſwains! A rich uſurer.

HEARTFREE.

An uſurer, and ſo young?

LISETTA.

As you ſee; but then he wallows in money; and is withal ſweet-temper'd, polite, prudent, and has not a grain of pride about him.

HEARTFREE.

Prudent he may be, but as to ſweet-tempered and polite, I believe he is the only one of his profeſſion that has a title to ſuch a character; I cannot conceive how an uſurer can be very polite.

LISETTA.

And yet nothing is more true, as you will have an opportunity of convincing yourſelf preſently, for I perceive he ſees us, and is coming this way.

SCENE VII.

Enter NEWLAND. *Who, after bowing very reſpectfully to* Heartfree *and* Sophia, *turns towards* Liſetta.

NEWLAND.

Pray, mrs. Liſetta, could I ſee madam Haughty?

LISETTA.

LISETTA.

I believe ſo, ſir.

NEWLAND.

Becauſe I am come to hear my fate from her lips.

HEARTFREE. [*Aſide to* Sophia.]

So, ſo! he makes love to the mother, I ſuppoſe, to get at the daughter.

SOPHIA. [*Laughing.*]

Ha! ha! ha! an excellent method.

HEARTFREE. [*To* Newland.]

In my opinion, good ſir, you are come hither on a kind of ſleeveleſs errand.

NEWLAND.

And why ſo, pray, good ſir?

HEARTFREE.

Becauſe, ſir, my ſiſter is a fool, and my niece a greater, you may take my word for it, ſir.

NEWLAND.

I preſume, ſir, you are mr. Heartfree.

HEARTFREE.

The very ſame, ſir, one who is a ſworn enemy to vanity and pride, and who, to his misfortune, has a mad woman for a ſiſter, and an inſolent huſſy for a neice.

NEWLAND.

Dear ſir, ſpeak in ſofter terms of ſo accompliſhed a beauty as the fair Pulcheria, whom it is ſufficient to ſee, and be for ever enſlaved. She is ſomewhat haughty, it is true, but then ſhe is worthy to rule over the univerſe, and therefore certainly ſhe may be allowed to ſet a proper value upon herſelf. Beſides, her very pride has ſomething ſo enchanting in it, that her lovers hug their chains without murmuring. Theſe, ſir, are my thoughts of the lady.

HEARTFREE.

I heartily wiſh you joy, ſir, of your opinion; if ſubmiſſion can have any merit with her, I am ſure ſhe ought to be perfectly ſatisfied with you, and reward ſo very humble an admirer. But hark! what noiſe is that?

LISETTA.

Oh! it is count Lofty, one whom you will not find quite ſo modeſt as this gentleman.

SCENE VIII.

Enter COUNT.

COUNT. [*To* Newland.]

Hey day! what, do I find you here again? have I not told you over and over, that you are hated, deteſted in this houſe; and yet you will ſtill waſte your time in dangling after a perſon that cannot even bear the ſight of you. Pr'ythee friend take my advice, pack up your awls and begone. The fair Pulcheria, whoſe ſpirit is equal to her beauty, is to be won only by a title, and I have half a ſcore to lay at her feet, and what haſt thou to offer? thy bags, I ſuppoſe; but let me tell you, little cent. per cent. that he has very ſlender merit, who has nothing but his money to boaſt of.

NEWLAND.

I am entirely of your lordſhip's opinion; but, with permiſſion, I apprehend a great eſtate may make up for the want of title, or even birth, provided that it does not pervert the heart or underſtanding, and is only made uſe of as a means of living with more credit in the world, and tho' the poſſeſſor may not be able to boaſt a long line of noble anceſtors, yet if he ſhews himſelf worthy of ſuch a pedigree, he is certainly more to be valued than the man,

man, who has only the empty honour of being highly deſcended, without one virtue to adorn the noble ſtem he ſpung from.

HEARTFREE.

Excellently anſwerd, by Jove!

COUNT. [*In an angry tone.*]

Maſter Newland, you talk now in a ſtile that I am not accuſtomed to.

NEWLAND.

I only ſpeak in general terms, my lord; I hope it cannot be conſtrued as an offence, that I maintain my own opinion againſt your's.

COUNT.

Hark ye, my friend, you may have lent me money perhaps, when I had a preſſing call for it; but I would not have you preſume too much upon that trifling circumſtance. I am now on the point of being married, when I ſhall be able to clear my eſtate; but I would have you know, do you obſerve me ſir! that little inſignificant money lenders, like you, are made to ſupply the wants of perſons of quality, like me, and furuniſh them with whatever they may pleaſe to aſk.

NEWLAND.

Really, my lord, this is a privilege of peerage I was not acquainted with before.

COUNT.

Well then, now I teach it you. Liſetta, are they viſible within?

LISETTA.

Yes, ſir.

COUNT.

Oh, very well——Then I ſhall quit this place, [*To* Newland.] but hold! a word more with you ſir, before I go.—Do you ſuppoſe now that this woman

woman and her daughter will ſuffer me to ſlip thro' their fingers, if they do, I am much miſtaken.

NEWLAND.

And poſſibly you may be miſtaken!

COUNT.

Miſtaken ha? me miſtaken!

NEWLAND.

Yes, you.—Every man has his merit, you build upon your's, and I do but follow your example.

COUNT. [*Slapping him on the ſhoulders.*]

Poor fellow! faith I cannot help pitying thee; but come along, I'll preſently ſhew thee thy folly in attempting to rival me.

[*Exeunt* Count *and* Newland.

SCENE IX.

LISETTA.

There they go both in a ſtring.

HEARTFREE.

Ay, ay, away they go, as you ſay, poſt haſte to Pulcheria, without ſaying a ſingle word to my poor Sophia. I am quite weary of all this, I can bear it no longer; I'll go find out the marquis, and——

SOPHIA.

Good heavens! here he comes, how my heart flutters!—What ſhall I do?

HEARTFREE.

Take courage, my girl, the marquis is young indeed, but he is a man of ſenſe.

LISETTA.

It may be ſo, ſir, but your men of ſenſe are as often miſtaken as others.

HEARTFREE.

Well, well, Liſetta, I am ſtill of opinion Sophia will have him inſtead of her ſiſter.—But here he is.

SCENE X.

Enter MARQUIS. [Hearfree *runs to embrace him.*]

HEARTFREE.

My dear marquis, I am overjoyed to ſee you, I want to have a little private converſation with you, in which I hope we ſhall underſtand each other to our mutual ſatisfaction.—Why, you ſeem abſent!

MARQUIS. [*Confuſed.*]

Excuſe me, mr. Heartfree, I——I——

HEARTFREE.

Ay now, I ſuppoſe you are all impatience to ſee my niece Pulcheria.

MARQUIS.

I muſt confeſs, mr. Heartfree, her eyes have enſlaved me; and in ſpite of all my endeavours, I cannot help loving her.

HEARTFREE.

Would you wiſh to help it then?

MARQUIS.

Yes, ſir; I now ſpeak without the leaſt diſguiſe. I am ſenſible I ought to do juſtice to the ſuperior merit of her ſiſter; my reaſon tells it me every hour.

SOPHIA. [*Coldly.*]

Our hearts you know, ſir, ſhould always guide our ſentiments, and when love ſpeaks, reaſon ſhould be ſilent.

MARQUIS.

Alas! madam, I experience the truth of what you ſay but too ſtrongly; I do not pretend to conceal

ceal my weakneſs; I am the dupe of a blind paſſion. Forgive me, madam, I bluſh to appear ſo mean in your eyes; but if the moſt perfect eſteem, the moſt ſincere regard ——

SOPHIA. [*Smiling.*]

Dear ſir, you are waſting the precious moments that might be ſo much more agreeably employed. Your rivals are within, marquis, do not loſe your time in compliments upon me; but begone, and make the moſt of that merit heaven has bleſſed you with; lay your pretenſions at my ſiſter's feet, who is now about to make choice of an huſband, and who certainly cannot be ſo loſt to all underſtanding, as not to give the preference where it is ſo juſtly due.

MARQUIS. [*Looking tenderly at her for ſome time.*]

It muſt be ſo! ſpite of myſelf I am forced to obey you. Heavens! how much reaſon have you to hate and deſpiſe me; but what am I ſaying? I injure you to ſuſpect you of ſuch weakneſs; I do not deſerve you ſhould throw away a thought upon me.

[*Exit, turning back every now and then to look at* Sophia.

LISETTA.

Away with you!

SCENE XI.

HEARTFREE.

What! is he gone, without hearing me ſpeak?

LISETTA.

Is this your perſon of ſenſe? the man's a natural!

HEARTFREE.

But ſee! he returns; and with him, his two rivals.

SOPHIA.

Then I ſuppoſe my ſiſter is not far off.

LISETTA.

Her mother is bringing her, I ſee.

HEARTFREE.

Oh, then, matters are ſettled, perhaps; and we ſhall ſee what choice ſhe has made.

LISETTA.

None of them, I think, look over and above ſatisfied.

SCENE XII.

Enter Mrs. HAUGHTY, PULCHERIA, DORIMANT, *the* COUNT, Mr. NEWLAND, *and the* MARQUIS.]

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Well, brother, I have acquainted my daughter with what you ſaid.

HEARTFREE.

And pray, in favour of whom may her goddeſſhip have declared at laſt?

NEWLAND.

Each of us, ſir, has, in his turn, endeavour'd to prevail on the lady to determine our fate, but to no purpoſe: ſhe anſwers us only by ſilent diſdain.

HEARTFREE. [*To* Mrs. Haughty.]

So theſe are the fruits of your remonſtrances!

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

She cannot be prevail'd on to ſpeak.

HEARTFREE.

Let me ſee if I cannot make her find her tongue! Heark'e, miſtreſs; I inſiſt upon it that you inſtantly———

PULCHERIA.

PULCHERIA. [*Haughtily.*]

Softly, if you pleaſe, ſir; there is no occaſion to bawl quite ſo loud.

HEARTFREE.

Ha! what do you ſay?

PULCHERIA.

I ſay I hate a noiſe; it is inſupportable to me!

HEARTFREE.

Sweet, tender chicken! how delicate ſhe is!

PULCHERIA. [*To* Mrs. Haughty.]

My uncle is a wit, madam, and I never knew it before; but if you have any love for me, deſire him to lower the tone of his voice a little.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

My dear brother——

HEARTFREE. [*Mimicking her.*]

Well, my dear ſiſter.

Mrs. HAUGHTY,

Be ſo kind to——

HEARTFREE.

To do what? To give way to her impertinence!

PULCHERIA.

Oh, the ruſtic! there's no bearing him! I muſt quit the room. [*Going.*]

HEARTFREE. [*Holding her.*]

Stay a little, if you pleaſe; I muſt have a word or two with you firſt: Let us come to the point—to the point!

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

For God's ſake, brother, behave with more civility.

HEARTFREE.

Very well, then.——[*He pulls off his hat; bows very reſpectfully to* Pulcheria, *and addreſſes her*

in a theatrical tone] Divine Pulcheria, deign to hear me ſpeak: Permit your uncle, with all humility, to beſeech you to be ſomewhat leſs imperious; to lay aſide that air of pride and diſdain, and to condeſcend to a little complaiſance. To mine, your mother joins her ſuppliant voice, not daring to require obedience from you; heaven's forbid!—No; ſhe is ready to caſt herſelf at your feet, and join with me in imploring you, adorable miſtreſs of all hearts, to make a choice, and for once declare your high pleaſure. [*Turning to* Mrs. Haughty] What think you? will this ſtile pleaſe her ladyſhip?

PULCHERIA.

Wits are always fond of ſhewing their parts; witneſs my uncle. Let him be angry or pleas'd; let him ſcold or joke, his converſation is always ſo entertaining! Pray go on, ſir——Talk in whatever ſtile beſt pleaſes you; you may depend upon it, it will divert me extremely.

HEARTFREE.

Zounds, madam! do you make a jeſt of me?

PULCHERIA.

I only follow your good example, ſir.

HEARTFREE.

What an inſolent minx it is! Is this the reſpect you owe to your uncle, miſs?

PULCHERIA.

When you ſpeak with civility, ſir, I ſhall anſwer you with reſpect.

HEARTFREE.

'Sdeath, madam! let us make an end of this affair, one way or another.

PULCHERIA.

Now there you are wrong again, ſir: an authoritative

ritative tone will never do with me; it only makes me treat the perſon with more diſdain: ſo pray mind for the future, that it is what I can by no means bear.

HEARTFREE. [*To the company.*]

You ſee, good folks, the admirable effects of education.——[*To mrs. Haughty.*] This is a noble monument of your wiſe conduct, ſiſter!

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Brother, you have no reaſon to complain of my conduct! Pulcheria has a great ſhare of prudence and good ſenſe; and theſe qualifications may very well warrant her to be a little proud. Beſides, that very pride you condemn, will always oblige her to act with virtue and diſcretion: ſo that you ſee, my wiſe brother, I have brought her up properly.

HEARTFREE.

Oh, moſt admirably! as theſe gentlemen are ready to witneſs, I dare ſay; who cannot but think themſelves prodigiouſly oblig'd to you for the effects of your great care.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

A truce with your wit, for heaven's ſake!

HEARTFREE.

Will you give me leave, then, madam, to aſk you, if you have informed miſs Pulcheria of my intention?

Mrs. HAUGHTON.

I have, ſir.

HEARTFREE.

What, then, prevents her making a choice?

PULCHERIA.

I muſt deſire, with your good leave and liking, ſir, to conſider of it at my leiſure.

HEARTFREE.

At your leiſure, ha! Determine inſtantly, or I diſinherit you. Conſider the merits of theſe four gentlemen, and fix upon him that you think will beſt ſuit you, or——

DORIMANT. [*To* Pulcheria.]

You cannot ſurely but approve of me, miſs.

PULCHERIA. [*Diſdainfully.*]

Of you, ſir?

DORIMANT.

Of me, madam? Why, it is an honour I may aſpire to, I preſume.

PULCHERIA.

Upon what pretenſions, pray?

DORIMANT.

Upon ſuch as I think of great weight, I aſſure you.

PULCHERIA.

May be ſo; but I am not acquainted with them.

DORIMANT. [*Making her a low bow.*]

You do me honour, madam; but ſince my hopes appear ſo very preſumptuous in your ladyſhip's eyes, pray what may be my fault?

PULCHERIA. [*Carleſsly*]

You don't pleaſe me.

DORIMANT.

I don't pleaſe you! may I be ſo bold to aſk the reaſon; for I long to know it, methinks.

PULCHERIA.

Why, if you muſt have it, I think there is ſomething very ſlovenly in the dreſs of you gentlemen of the bar.

DORIMANT.

There are thoſe, however, madam, to whom I do not appear ſo very ſhocking.

HEARTFREE.

HEARTFREE.

So much for the law. Now for the money-bags.

PULCHERIA.

The money-bags! oh, horrible!

HEARTFREE.

Hey! what's the matter now?

PULCHERIA.

The matter, indeed! what, I an uſurer's wife! I ſhould be glad to know how long a money-bag has been a title.

HEARTFREE.

What better one would you have?

PULCHERIA.

Oh, for heaven's ſake, talk to me no more upon that head!

NEWLAND.

Conſider, madam, I have that which will procure both rank and ſplendor, if I pleaſe. The man who has money, hath all things, ſays the poet; and my fortune is ſuch, as may ſatisfy your moſt extenſive wiſhes. You know your empire o'er my heart: my wealth is your's, command it as you pleaſe. In a word, I can offer you every advantage but that of birth. We too often ſee nobility wedded to indigence; and pompous titles, deſtitute of means to ſupport them, are but poor comforts. True greatneſs conſiſts (if I underſtand it right) in being able to procure all we wiſh. Now riches will purchaſe every-thing; and conſequently the money'd man has only to wiſh and have.

PULCHERIA.

But I muſt tell you, ſir, that I ſet no value upon what is to be purchas'd. I like honours, and I like wealth; but either, alone, has no charms for me: beſides, I could never bear a gentleman of

yeſterday. A woman who makes an alliance beneath herſelf, is for ever reproachable; and I am ſure, if it was to be my caſe, I could never ſurvive the ſhame.

HEARTFREE.

So! two have already got their diſcharge. Count! it's your turn next.

DORIMANT. [*To* Newland.]

Let us ſtay and ſee the end of this comedy.

COUNT.

The happy moment is now come, in which all my wiſhes will be crown'd.—Nor is it the leaſt of my joy, that my diſcarded rivals will be witneſſes to my triumph. Hear, then, ye hapleſs lovers, hear me declare, that to-morrow ſhall unite two hearts form'd only for each other. Yes, lovely Pulcheria, to-morrow will tie the knot that is to make us both for ever bleſt.

PULCHERIA.

And pray, ſir, who told you ſo?

COUNT.

Thoſe eyes, my charmer; thoſe lovely melting eyes, whoſe tender glances plainly diſcover the intereſt I have in your heart: beſides, have you not baniſh'd my rivals? what greater proof can I deſire of your affection, and of your readineſs to reſign yourſelf to me?

PULCHERIA.

You are wondrous haſty, ſir, in your concluſion. Is there no one but yourſelf remaining for me to make choice of as a huſband?

COUNT.

But do I not know your delicacy, charming maid? on that I build my hopes; on that I reſt my aſſurance. Can you make a more ſuitable choice?

PULCHERIA.

PULCHERIA.

Moſt certainly I can, ſir; and I have already told you ſo, more than once: but the high opinion you entertain of yourſelf, has made you confident of being lov'd by me, in ſpite of all I could ſay to the contrary: and, in return, I am now reſolv'd to undeceive you whether you will or no; and to convince you, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, that you have not the leaſt intereſt in my heart. Therefore, once for all, take it from me, that if I make a choice, it certainly will not fall upon you. Thus far, I think, I have explain'd myſelf pretty clearly———

COUNT.

Yes, really, madam; your compliment is perfectly intelligible; it does not ſtand in need of the leaſt comment. You expect, I ſuppoſe, ſome mournful effects of this your cruelty to your humble ſlave; ſuch as ſighs, groans, reproaches, tears, and bitter wailings: and that, in deſpair at my diſmiſſion, I ſhould, the inſtant I leave your preſence, put an end to a life that I am no longer permitted to paſs at your feet. But know, too haughty fair one, that I muſt beg to be excuſed from giving theſe tragical proofs of the ſincerity of my paſſion: and ſhall leave to theſe gentlemen, whom you have driven to deſpair by the ſeverity of your refuſal, the unconteſted honour of making a figure in hiſtory, by ſo glorious an exit. As to myſelf, little ambitious of ſuch diſtinguiſh'd fame, inſtead of becoming the victim of your cruelty, I ſhall endeavour to ſeek for comfort elſewhere: and ſo, madam, I am your moſt obedient, humble ſervant. Tol, lol, derol. [*Exit ſinging.*]

SCENE

SCENE XIII.

DORIMANT. [*To* Pulcheria.]

As for me, madam, I willingly relinquish my share of the honour the count left to me; and flatter myself I shall find a more gentle remedy to my sufferings. [*Exit.*]

SCENE XIV.

NEWLAND.

I, madam, never entertained a very high opinion of myself, and therefore am not in the least surpriz'd at being rejected by you: but I was in hopes my great riches might have engag'd you to declare in my favour. This was the only merit I had to plead; and it has its force with others, and those of the most exalted rank too: but, since I find you think yourself insulted by the offer, and treat my pretensions with disdain and contempt, I shall transfer them to another, who may possibly set a greater value upon them. And so, madam, I take my leave. [*Exit.*]

SCENE XV.

HEARTFREE.

There go three, besides three thousand others, who have repaid your insolence with the contempt justly due to it. Now, let us see if the marquis will share the same fate with the rest of his rivals: or, perhaps, you have reserv'd your hand for him. Come, do you think you can prevail upon yourself to accept a person of his rank?—Think seriously—will it not be too great a concession in your high mightiness?

PULCHERIA.

PULCHERIA.

Uncle, let us lay aſide raillery. If there ever was a man that could pleaſe me, it is the marquis.

SOPHIA. [*Aſide.*]

Juſt heavens! what a wretch am I?

PULCHERIA.

But, call me proud, and vain, or what you pleaſe, I ſhall not ſcruple to acknowledge that I have more exalted views, and expect a huſband with a higher title.

LISETTA. [*To* Heartfree.]

Did not I tell you ſo?

HEARTFREE.

So that we may infer, a marquis is beneath your ladyſhip's notice; is it not ſo?

PULCHERIA.

No, not abſolutely beneath my notice. But this gentleman is of a family that may claim a higher rank than he is at preſent in poſſeſſion of; and I am perſuaded he might obtain it, if he thought proper to ſolicit it: and, as I am no ſtranger to his merit, whenever that happens, I ſhall certainly declare in his favour; but, till then, I muſt deſire to be excus'd; for I am determined not to give my hand to any one under the title of duke.

HEARTFREE.

And ſo, this is your final anſwer?

PULCHERIA.

It is.

HEARTFREE.

Mighty well! Do you hear all this, ſir?

[*To the* marquis.]

MARQUIS.

Yes, ſir, I hear it.

HEARTFREE. [*To* Pulcheria.]

' No one under the title of duke muſt pretend to your hand, you ſay?

PULCHERIA.

I think I ſpoke plain enough.

HEARTFREE.

You have moſt exalted ſentiments, indeed, miſs; thanks to the conduct of your wiſe mother, here.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

But, after all, brother; can I force miſs to think otherwiſe than ſhe can think?

HEARTFREE.

No certainly; it would be quite barbarous in you. As you, madam, [*To* Pulcheria.] have been pleaſed to declare your high beheſt in ſuch plain terms; give me leave, in my turn, to acquaint you as plainly with my ſentiments. I ſhall make but ſhort work of it. In the firſt place, then, I think my ſiſter here, your mother, a fool; and you, an imperious, inſolent, vain, impertinent, little huſſy. But as, perhaps, you may think I am ſomewhat wanting in the reſpect due to a perſon of your prodigious conſequence, I have only to add, that, from this inſtant, I cut you off from every ſhilling you might expect from me, and leave you to make a fortune for yourſelf.

PULCHERIA. [*Haughtily.*]

Form'd as I am, I want not a fortune! My ſiſter, indeed, may ſtand in need of ſuch an addition; and it will be kind in you to give the poor girl ſomething to ſet her off.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Admirably anſwered!

PULCHEDIA,

PULCHERIA.

The hopes of a fortune ſhall never tempt me to brook an inſult, much leſs a menace. I have nothing more to ſay, and ſo ſhall withdraw. Your ſervant. [*Exit haſtily.*

SCENE XVI.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Brother, brother! my daughter is right, and you are wrong.

HEARTFREE.

Oh! if that's the caſe, I'll go after her, and aſk her pardon. Follow me: you ſhall ſee fine ſport.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

For heaven's ſake, brother!——

HEARTFREE.

Oh! I ſhall burſt if I have not my frolic out!

LISETTA. [*To* Sophia]

This concerns you. I'll follow and liſten, and come and tell you all they ſay.

[*Exit, after* Heartfree *and* Mrs. Haughty.

SCENE XVII.

SOPHIA. [*Smiling.*]

Marquis! why do you remain behind?

MARQUIS.

Lovely Sophia! I cannot leave you.

SOPHIA.

Lovely Sophia! Ah! you fancy you are ſpeaking to Pulcheria!

MARQUIS.

No, charming maid! I have recover'd my reaſon. I now declare myſelf your lover; and am ready to become your huſband to-morrow.

SOPHIA,

SOPHIA.

So then, thanks to your diſappointment elſe-where, I do at length appear worthy your regard; but I fancy my reign will prove of ſhort duration. A ſingle look of my ſiſter's will be ſufficient to terminate it.

MARQUIS.

No, madam, I am now reſolv'd to do you juſtice, and puniſh her fooliſh pride.

SOPHIA.

Ah, marquis! ceaſe your flattery. I am not the credulous creature you take me for.

MARQUIS.

So ſudden a change may doubtleſs appear ridiculous to you, madam; but give me leave to aſſure you, that reaſon is ſtronger than paſſion in my breaſt. I owe the recovery of mine to you; and it is in your power to enſure its duration. My preſent reſolves are not of to-day. A thouſand times have I reproached myſelf in the ſtrongeſt manner, for being blind to ſuch exalted merit and amiable qualifications as you are miſtreſs of: But what I have lately been witneſs to, determin'd me to pay the tribute due to ſo much virtue. Tho' I was ſilent during the ſcene that ſo lately paſſed before us, I reſolv'd, in ſecret, to make you triumph over the miſplac'd charms of your ſiſter, that had ſo long faſcinated my mind. At length I have knock'd off my chains, and am once more free.

SOPHIA.

You think ſo perhaps; but forgive me, marquis, if I cannot join with you in opinion. Truſt not your boaſted reaſon too far. Conſider well what you are about to do: you offer me a ſacrifice that might flatter the vanity of any woman; but I know myſelf too well, not to be ſenſible that this

is

is the effect of pique and reſentment. I may paſs perhaps in a crowd; but I can by no means ſtand the teſt of compariſon: and, tho' I may chance to pleaſe for an inſtant, let my ſiſter but appear, and my tranſient power quickly vaniſhes.

MARQUIS.

I ſwear———

SOPHIA.

Oh! do not ſwear.

MARQUIS.

And be heaven witneſs to———

SOPHIA.

Forbear, leſt you ſhould be perjur'd.

MARQUIS.

May I periſh before your eyes if I'm not ſincere! Permit me——

SOPHIA.

Well, ſwear then, if it will be any ſatisfaction to you.

MARQUIS.

No, I will not ſwear; I have more convincing proofs to give you that I have broke my former chains, and am now all yours, and yours alone.

SOPHIA.

And are you ſure of this?

MARQUIS.

I engage my honour——

SOPHIA.

I fear too raſhly.

MARQUIS.

Do but hear me.

SOPHIA.

Speak then.

MARQUIS.

There were four of us ſuitors to the too haughty Pulcheria, and have been all alike rejected, as not being of ſufficient rank to anſwer her exalted views. Me, indeed, ſhe honour'd with marks of eſteem above the reſt; and I ſhould probably have triumph'd over my rivals, had I had a higher title.

SOPHIA.

I was witneſs, you know, to her declaration.

MARQUIS.

A declaration which has wrought my cure. Your ſiſter's extravagant pride gave me a mean opinion of her underſtanding. I ſought to gain her heart by a ſincere paſſion; but I found her regardleſs of every thing but ſplendor and ſhew. That idle vanity, which ſhe makes her boaſt, gave me the victory over myſelf; and I determined to mortify her in the moſt effectual manner. As a proof of what I ſay, I muſt acquaint you, that I have it in my power to indulge her to her utmoſt wiſh; for I have juſt obtain'd that title ſhe is ſo deſirous of.

SOPHIA.

What do I hear?

MARQUIS.

I came full fraught with this agreeable news; when her overbearing behaviour gave me a ſudden turn: and juſtice, taking part with my reaſon, compelled me to be ſilent, and turn my thoughts to you alone.

SOPHIA.

Was it poſſible you could do this violence to your heart, and be ſilent, when you had only to ſpeak, and be bleſt with your fondeſt wiſhes? Oh, marquis!

MARQUIS.

Yes, charming Sophia! I felt a generous pleasure in thus disappointing the vanity of one who would have esteemed me only for my title; and I now lay it at the feet of her who is truly worthy of honours, by the disregard she shews to them. [*Throwing himself at her feet.*] Accept then, adorable maid, of a heart which, I flatter myself, is no disagreeable present to you—Lisetta——

SOPHIA.

I know she has betray'd me to you: but I forgive her, provided your reason approves your choice. But, alas! I have a powerful rival to dread in my sister. Pulcheria has only to appear, and you are her's again.

MARQUIS.

I find you know me not. As yet my heart——

SOPHIA.

Is a generous one; but it may deceive itself; and, in so doing, deceive us both.

SCENE XVIII.

Enter LISETTA.

LISETTA.

I am come to tell you the most extraordinary scene——

MARQUIS.

You may spare yourself the trouble, Lisetta: I am once more a free man. Pulcheria, by her pride, has overturned the empire she had in my heart; and I am resolv'd to punish her vanity. Go, find Mr. Heartfree, and tell him from me——

LISETTA. [*In amaze.*]

Sir!

MARQUIS.

Tell him the agreeable news I have juſt receiv'd.

LISETTA.

With all my heart, ſir; but—may I take the liberty of aſking what it is?

MARQUIS.

The king has been pleas'd to create me a duke.

LISETTA.

Pſha! now you are joking.

MARQUIS.

Stay: as a proof of it, carry him this letter; which will confirm all I ſay.

LISETTA. [*Taking the letter.*]

If it is ſo, ſir, you have nothing more to do but fix your wedding-day with miſs Pulcheria.

MARQUIS.

I know it.

LISETTA.

But then, in what manner do you propoſe to puniſh that haughty beauty as you was ſaying juſt now?

MARQUIS.

Oh, you ſhall preſently ſee.

LISETTA.

I know an excellent way to do it: and, if your ſcheme does but tally with mine——

MARQUIS.

Haſte, Liſetta; and return to let us know the effects that the reading this letter produces.

[*Exit* Liſetta.]

SCENE.

SCENE XIX.

SOPHIA.

The effects will be too ſudden and fatal to me.

MARQUIS.

Why, my charmer, will you ſtill diſtruſt me? Let me conjure thee to ſuffer me to manage my revenge as I pleaſe; and place an entire confidence in my honour.

SOPHIA.

In any other thing I would truſt my life to it; but this deſire of revenge proceeds only from a warmth of paſſion. Love, marquis, love animates you more than juſtice.

MARQUIS.

How cruel is it in you to doubt me thus? I am not ſuch a ſlave to beauty as you imagine; no, madam; a generous ſoul is a thouſand times more amiable, in my opinion; and that I find in you. Beauty may triumph for a while, but virtue and good ſenſe will always maintain their power.

SOPHIA.

I am convinc'd you think at preſent as you ſay. For my part, I have always given the preference to reaſon: but, in my ſiſter's preſence, reaſon is compelled to be mute; and the voice of love alone prevails. If you would make me ſure of my victory, fly from her ſight.

MARQUIS.

No, madam; my ſoul diſdains ſuch meanneſs—My honour and your's are both concern'd.——

SOPHIA.

Ah! for heaven's ſake, let us not ſacrifice certainty to imaginary honour!

MARQUIS.

MARQUIS.

Thus to doubt of my reaſon and conſtancy, is doing an injury to yourſelf and me.

SOPHIA.

Here ſhe comes! Heavens! what a dreadful ſituation am I in?

SCENE the Laſt.

Enter Mrs. HAUGHTY, HEARTFREE, PULCHERIA, *and* LISETTA.

HEARTFREE. [*To the* marquis.]

My lord duke, we are come to congratulate you on your new dignity. We have peruſed your letter with the greateſt pleaſure, and my niece is come to return it to you.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

I moſt ſincerely join with my daughter in compliments to your grace on this happy occaſion.

MARQUIS.

I am overjoy'd to find———

PULCHERIA. [*Returning the letter to the marquis.*]

That your merit, my lord, is rewarded with thoſe honours which are ſo juſtly its due, cannot but afford great ſatisfaction to all your friends; in the number of which I reckon myſelf: but I cannot help ſaying, I am ſomewhat ſurpriz'd at your behaviour on this occaſion. I imagin'd that you would have come in perſon to confirm to me ſo happy and intereſting an event. But, inſtead of that, to ſend a meſſage by a ſervant!—I muſt own it is ſomething very extraordinary!——

HEARTFREE.

HEARTFREE.

Now, you muſt know, miſs, that this behaviour, which is ſo ſhocking to your delicacy, is, in my opinion,—in my opinion, I ſay, extremely right.

PULCHERIA.

And why ſo, pray, ſir?

HEARTFREE.

Becauſe it is, modeſt.

PULCHERIA.

Modeſt! admirable that!

HEARTFREE.

And very commendable.

PULCHERIA.

And very unaccountable, I am ſure. His lordſhip may have his reaſons for acting in this manner; and I have mine for being offended at it. It is a want of reſpect, that I muſt be extremely eaſy and good-natur'd to forgive.

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*To the* marquis.]

Indeed, ſir, I cannot but think that you might, upon the firſt notice of this glorious news, have haſten'd to lay your new title at my daughter's feet; and, by ſo tender and reſpectful an offering, have engag'd her to ſurrender her heart——

PULCHERIA.

It is a compliment I ſurely had a right to expect; but you, ſir, ſeem deſirous I ſhould think otherwiſe. You imagin'd, I preſume, that it would be leſſening your new dignity to lay it at my feet; and expected, doubtleſs, an advance on my ſide: but, do not deceive yourſelf, ſir;—tho' my hand may yet be your's, becauſe I think you worthy of it, yet I would not have you conceive your high rank alone ſufficient to gain it, unleſs you conſiderably abate in your pride.

MARQUIS.

MARQUIS.

No, madam; to whatever rank I may be rais'd, I ſhall never expect your hand or heart as the reward of my paſſion; and if I have hitherto had the preſumption to lift my thoughts up to you, I am now ready to make atonement for the offence I have been guilty of, by withdrawing my raſh pretenſions, and transferring the homage of a heart you ſo juſtly deſpiſe, to another, who may, perhaps, think it more worthy her acceptance. Will you, madam, deign to receive the hand I now offer you? [*To* Sophia]

LISETTA. [*To* Sophia.]

Come, madam, endeavour, if poſſible, to comply with his lordſhip's requeſt.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Sure, ſir, you are not in earneſt.

MARQUIS.

I aſſure you, madam, I ſpeak with the utmoſt ſincerity.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Impoſſible! I will never believe it. What! prefer her! [*Looking ſcornfully at* Sophia] that dowdy, to her ſiſter! oh, it cannot be!

MARQUIS.

To-morrow, if her uncle, mr. Heartfree, will give his conſent, I make this lady my wife.

HEARTFREE.

Give my conſent! why, I would give my life to procure my Sophia ſo great an happineſs.

MARQUIS.

If what you are pleas'd to call an happineſs, mr. Heartfree, appears ſo to the young lady, it is to be purchas'd at a much cheaper rate; nothing more is wanting but her aſſent, and your concurrence.

HEARTFREE.

You have it with all my ſoul. Come hither, niece; give the marquis your hand: [*Joining their hands*] there; bleſs you both! And now, madam, [*Turning to mrs.* Haughty] marry your child as ſoon as you can; I have provided for mine.

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

You may think ſo, perhaps, ſir; but I ſhall find a way to diſconcert this fine project.

HEARTFREE.

You diſconcert it! I ſhall let you know, madam, that ſhe is not in your power, but mine.

SOPHIA. [*Kneeling to mrs.* Haughty.]

Permit me, madam, thus on my knees——

Mrs. HAUGHTY.

Inſolent creature! Out of my ſight——Oh! I ſhall run mad!

HEARTFREE.

Well, mrs. Haughty, your ſervant.——Let me adviſe you to give your conſent with a good grace, or means will be found to compel you to it.

Mrs. HAUGHTY. [*Falling upon* Pulcheria's *neck.*]

Alas, my deareſt child, thy ſiſter will be a dutcheſs.

HEARTFREE.

Well, make the other a princeſs out of hand, and there's an end of the matter.——[*To the* Marquis *and* Sophia.] Come, children, my houſe is now yours.——[*To* Pulcheria.] As to you, my proud dame, remember,

Who graſps at all, is ſure at length to find
The ſubſtance loſt; the ſhadow left behind.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

The END.

To the READER.

IN this, and the following piece, we have taken the liberty of altering the names of the perſons in the French *drama, the better to accommodate them to the ear of the* Engliſh *reader; and ſhall continue ſo to do, wherever the harſhneſs of the ſound, or a too frequent repetition of the ſame names in different plays, warrants ſuch ſubſtitution.*

THE

THE
LIBERTINE;
OR, THE
HIDDEN TREASURE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Old BELLAIR.
ALLWORTHY.
MEANWELL.
Young BELLAIR.
FREDERICK.
PACE.
FRONT.
TRUSTY.
A Footman,

HORTENSIA.
JULIA.

SCENE, A Terras before Old BELLAIR's House.

THE LIBERTINE;

OR, THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ALLWORTHY *and* MEANWELL *meeting.*

ALLWORTHY.

MY good friend, mr. Meanwell, I am glad I have met you; I was juſt going in ſearch of you.

MEANWELL.

And I was coming to ſpeak with you.

ALLWORTHY.

I am heartily glad to ſee you; let us go back into the houſe.

MEANWELL.

No, no, we can talk very well here; there is no one to interrupt us; and theſe trees afford a cool and agreeable ſhade.

ALLWORTHY.

As you pleaſe. But what ails you, my friend? what means that gloomy and melancholy air?

MEANWELL.

It means, Mr. Allworthy, that I am very angry with you, and am come purpoſely to chide you.

ALLWORTHY.

To chide me?

MEANWELL.

Yes, you.

ALLWORTHY.

On what account?

MEANWELL.

Fie, fie, mr. Allworthy, are you not aſham'd? tell me; are you not aſham'd to act ſo differently to what you always have done?

ALLWORTHY.

In what, pray?

MEANWELL.

In what? how can you aſk that queſtion? what is become of your former probity? what have you done with that innocence of manners, of which your anceſtors ſet you ſo noble an example; and which you have, till now, ſo fairly copied? Can you want to be told, that by following the iniquitous ways of the preſent age, you ſcandalize all thoſe who were your friends, and pervert them by your example?

ALLWORTHY.

Good heavens! how can I have deſerved theſe bitter reproaches from you? what have you to accuſe me of?

MEANWELL.

Give ear, then, while I will tell you, that the world cries ſhame on you. They ſcruple not to ſay, that you have the moſt ſordid thirſt for gain; and that, like a vulture, you devour alike friends and foes. In a word, that you make no diſtinction where your intereſt is concern'd. Think you, I can ſtand tamely by, and hear your reputation thus mangled? you ſmile!

ALLWORTHY.

What elſe ſhould I do? Come, come, my friend, I can whenever I pleaſe give the lye to all theſe infamous reports; and make thoſe bluſh, who dare thus wantonly, thus unjuſtly accuſe me!

MEANWELL.

I am willing to believe the beſt; but facts, facts, mr. Allworthy, ſpeak againſt you; and thoſe, you know, are irrefragable proofs.

ALLWORTHY.

Agreed, provided the cauſe is not miſtaken.

MEANWELL.

Was not old mr. Bellair your boſom friend?

ALLWORTHY.

He was, and ſtill is ſo; and I could, in a few words, convince you, that he places the moſt unbounded confidence in me, and (let me ſay it without vanity) that I deſerve it all.

MEANWELL.

Let me hear all you have to ſay.

ALLWORTHY.

You know that mr. Bellair, from the blameable fondneſs he had for his ſon, reduc'd himſelf to the greateſt neceſſity to ſupply his extravagancies; till at length he had no reſource left to ſupport his ſinking fortunes, but to go over to the Eaſt-Indies,

in order to find out a brother of his, who had been ſettled there for ſome time, and had acquired a very large fortune.

MEANWELL.

I know it very well.

ALLWORTHY.

You cannot but know, at the ſame time, my dear friend, that mr. Bellair, having loſt his wife ſome few months before his departure, cauſed the ſmall remains of his fortune to be convey'd to my houſe; and, together with them, brought this ſon of his, then of age, and a daughter who was eighteen years old, for me to take care of them in his abſence. Now you will allow, mr. Meanwell, that if he had not look'd upon me as a ſecond ſelf, he would not have entruſted me with ſo precious a charge.

MEANWELL.

True; but why then, tell me, have you ſuffer'd this ſon of his, who was the ſole cauſe of his ruin, to complete his own deſtruction ſince his father's departure? Why have you not us'd all your endeavours to reclaim him, and bring him to a due ſenſe of his follies and extravagance?

ALLWORTHY.

Could I do that by advice or remonſtrances, which a parent could not effect with all his authority?

MEANWELL.

But to come to the principal point——Ha! what raſcal is this, that is liſtening to what we ſay?

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter PACE.

ALLWORTHY.

You have rightly nam'd him; it is Pace. [*To* Pace.] Well, what do you want here?

PACE.

Want, quotha! why, I want my libertine of a maſter; I cannot find him high nor low: and I come to ſee if he was here.

ALLWORTHY.

Sirrah! ſirrah! you are better acquainted with his haunts than any one elſe, and only pretend ignorance of where he is, to have a pretext of coming here as a ſpy; or perhaps to ſteal ſomething from me to carry to him.

PACE.

Me, ſir! I would have you to know, that I am neither thief nor ſpy; if you don't know an honeſt man when you ſee him, I am ſorry for it: but I am one, I give you my honour.

ALLWORTHY.

Your honour! go, go; like maſter like man.

PACE.

If the man and the maſter were ſo alike, I know that mine would not be in the condition he is, nor his poor ſervant ſo badly cloath'd, and worſe fed; no, no, if I muſt ſpeak my mind, I love plenty and decency.

ALLWORTHY.

You have lov'd them but too well, and your maſter too; and no one has contributed to his ruin ſo much as yourſelf.

PACE.

I have not hinder'd it, to be ſure; but is that my fault? my maſter hir'd me to be his ſervant, not his tutor: beſides, I muſt confeſs. I am naturally of ſo compliable a diſpoſition, that I love to give way to every one's humour: now my maſter's was to ruin himſelf, and ſo I let him do it. But at the ſame time, I muſt tell you, ſir, that my maſter, ſince he has been poor, is infinitely dearer to me, than when he was rolling in gold and ſilver: and notwithſtanding the bad opinion you are pleas'd to entertain of me, I would ſuffer myſelf to be cut into pieces to do him ſervice. But alas! I have not ſet eyes on him theſe three days; and I am almoſt diſtracted to know what is become of him.

ALLWORTHY.

Lying varlet! get out of my ſight this inſtant; and if ever I catch thee hovering about this houſe again, I'll———

PACE.

Will you give me leave, before I go, ſir, to requeſt one ſmall favour of you.

ALLWORTHY.

What is that?

PACE.

That you would be ſo good to lend me a guinea.

ALLWORTHY.

I lend you a guinea?

PACE.

I'll give you my note for it, ſir.

MEANWELL.

Doubtleſs, no one can refuſe ſo good ſecurity.

PACE.

True, ſir; beſides, my maſter ſhall endorſe it.

MEANWELL.

Yes; and then mr. Allworthy will have nothing to do, but wait till he's paid.

ALLWORTHY.

Heark'e, mr. Pace, I am not in caſh at preſent; but if a dozen or two of baſtinadoes will be of any ſervice to you, I'll lend them you with all my heart.

PACE.

You are very obliging, ſir; and I am ready to accept your offer, upon one condition.

ALLWORTHY.

Which is———

PACE.

That you will pleaſe to let me return them to you the firſt opportunity, for I love to pay my debts.

ALLWORTHY.

Come hither, ſcoundrel, come hither.

PACE.

Excuſe me, ſir, I'm a little in haſte, and ſo your ſervant [*Going*]. But whom do I ſee? by all that's good, my maſter my own dear maſter; couragio! couragio!

ALLWORTHY.

Who? Bellair?

PACE.

Yes, he himſelf, by this good light! now I care for no one.

SCENE III.

Enter Young BELLAIR.

PACE. [*Running to him, and throwing his arms about him.*]

My ſweet maſter, how rejoic'd am I to ſee you; good

good God! where can you have hid yourſelf ſo long? Egad, I have been almoſt out of my little wits.

ALLWORTHY.

Oh! it is you, ſir!

Young BELLAIR.

As you ſee.

ALLWORTHY.

Pray where may you have been theſe three days?

PACE.

Oh, no matter where he has been, he's welcome back.

Young BELLAIR.

Why, I have been at a friend's houſe, where, upon my ſoul, I have paſs'd my time pleaſantly enough.

ALLWORTHY.

A friend's houſe! a miſtreſs's you mean, I ſuppoſe.

Young BELLAIR.

No, upon my honour. Oh! I have quite done with miſtreſſes now.

PACE.

And I too.

Young BELLAIR.

An honeſt friend and companion of mine took me with him to a pretty country box he has about ten miles out of town, and there we have been diverting ourſelves with about half a dozen honeſt fellows more, in living well, and fleecing a ridiculous cit, who has lately been ennobled, and affects to loſe his money like a man of quality.

PACE.

A very innocent amuſement!

ALLWORTHY.

Yes, yes, it is eaſily ſeen you have been in good company. What a figure he is!

PACE.

He is in ſomewhat of an undreſs, indeed.

ALLWORTHY.

An undreſs! why his eyes are ſunk into his head, his hair all about his ears, and his face plaiſter'd an inch thick with ſnuff.

PACE.

Lord, ſir, it is the faſhionable air.

ALLWORTHY.

Suppoſe your father was to ſee you in this condition?

PACE.

Why then he would give him money to recruit again.

ALLWORTHY.

Would he ſo? then I ſhould blame him very much.

Young BELLAIR.

Heark'e, old gentleman; this is no time for preaching: do you know I have not a ſhilling in my pocket?

ALLWORTHY.

Nor I neither.

PACE.

Nor I, upon my honour.

Young BELLAIR.

Nor you? If I am not miſtaken, there is a ſmall reckoning between you and I.

PACE.

I have my account ready, ſir; but I am afraid you will not be much the richer for it.

ALLWORTHY.

Sure you cannot be out of caſh already? it is but a very little while ſince I paid you three thouſand pounds for the purchaſe of your houſe.

MEANWELL.

How! have you the face to ſay that in my hearing?

ALLWORTHY.

Certainly.

MEANWELL.

Then I renounce all friendſhip with you from this day.

Young BELLAIR.

It is true, I receiv'd three thouſand pounds of you; and yet you muſt give me your table for a few days.

PACE.

'Till we can touch the intereſt for our money, and then———

ALLWORTHY.

Do you imagine I'll ſuffer ſuch a libertine as you to live under the ſame roof with my daughter! You may remember, when you ſold me your houſe, you reſerv'd only a ſmall apartment in one of the offices for yourſelf, and your precious valet, here. Now live there how you can; but you may reſt aſſur'd, that you ſhall ſee no more of my daughter, than if ſhe was in the Eaſt-Indies with your father.

Young BELLAIR.

No! why, I'll ſee her in ſpite of you! I'll love her in ſpite of you, and I'll marry her whether you will or no.

ALLWORTHY.

Tolerably modeſt, that! however, you ſhall certainly marry her, when you become an example of ſobriety and good behaviour.

Young BELLAIR.

And you will give me your word I ſhall have Julia on thoſe conditions.

ALLWORTHY.

Oh yes; I think I may promiſe you that, without running any great riſk.

Young BELLAIR.

In that you may be miſtaken. I have already began to make ſome ſerious reflections; and am now actually going to ſettle my affairs.

PACE.

And they will be ſo ſettled!

ALLWORTHY.

A pretty time to begin to ſettle his affairs, when a man is completely ruin'd!

PACE.

Come, ſir, come away; we muſt look out elſewhere, I ſee that: there is no good to be expected from this quarter.

Young BELLAIR.

Well, father-in-law, adieu. I am determin'd to have your daughter; and then, you know, I muſt be your heir in conſequence.

ALLWORTHY.

Loſe no time then; for ſhe will be provided for within theſe four-and-twenty hours.

Young BELLAIR.

Say you ſo, old Truepenny! Well then, take it from me, that whoever dares accept her hand, may depend upon not outliving his inſolence half that time: ſo, profit by my advice; and, if you are as wiſe as you would be thought, act accordingly.

ALLWORTHY.

Do you imagine I am to be ſcared by your idle menaces?

Young BELLAIR.

Have a care how you drive me to deſpair. Farewell. Follow me, Pace.

PACE.

With all my ſoul. I'd follow you to a jail, and ſtarve with you when we get there.

[*Exeunt*, Young Bellair *and* Pace.]

SCENE IV.

MEANWELL.

There's a bleſſed pair of them!

ALLWORTHY.

I am diſtracted for my poor friend.

MEANWELL.

What theſe two libertines have been ſaying, is a melancholy confirmation to me of the truth of common report concerning the ill uſe you have made of your charge: for, inſtead of anſwering the prudent precautions of your friend, in committing his ſon to your care, you are yourſelf more culpable than him with all his exceſſes.

ALLWORTHY.

Why, for heaven's ſake, what have I done?

MEANWELL.

Done? have you not bought the houſe you now live in of this ſpendthrift?

ALLWORTHY.

Had he not a right to diſpoſe of it? it was part of his mother's fortune, and he is of age.

MEANWELL.

With what unconcern you anſwer me! Is not buying this houſe driving your friend out of it? and, by paying ready money for it, you furniſh his extravagant ſon with freſh means to indulge in

riot

riot and debauchery: and, in ſhort, arm him with a ſword to ſtab himſelf———

ALLWORTHY.

But how could I diſpenſe with paying him the money for the houſe; when I knew he ſold it partly for the ſake of a little ready caſh?

MEANWELL.

May be not. But ſtill I inſiſt that you ought not to have purchas'd it of him. This is ſo baſe an action (for I will not mince the matter with you) that, when old mr. Bellair returns, he will never forgive it. He is a generous and diſintereſted friend, indeed, that will turn another's misfortunes to his own profit. Fie, fie, mr. Allworthy! I bluſh for you.

ALLWORTHY.

Hear me, mr Meanwell: the ſtabbing reproaches you make, are inſupportable, as they are unmerited. Now, hear from me a ſecret that I thought never to have revealed to any one. But, before I open myſelf to you, give me your word of honour that you will keep it an inviolable ſecret.

MEANWELL.

I promiſe it you by whatever is moſt ſacred.

ALLWORTHY.

Know then——but can no one overhear us?

MEANWELL.

Not a ſoul is near. Speak without fear.

ALLWORTHY. [*Looking about as he ſpeaks.*]

Know then, that our friend Dorimon——I am ſadly afraid ſome one ſhould be liſtening——

MEANWELL.

Go on; I'll take care no one approaches.

ALLWORTHY.

Know then, I ſay, that our good friend, mr. Bellair, ſome few days before his departure, diſcover'd to me a conſiderable treaſure which he had bury'd in the garden belonging to this houſe.

MEANWELL.

A conſiderable treaſure?

ALLWORTHY.

I may call it conſiderable; for it amounted to near thirty thouſand pounds in good hard pieces of gold.

MEANWELL.

You amaze me! it is what I never could have ſuppos'd.

ALLWORTHY.

It was all he had left of a very handſome fortune, honeſtly acquired, when he made me this diſcovery; committing it, at the ſame time, to my friendly charge. He entreated me, with tears in his eyes, never to repeat the ſecret to any one; above all, to his extravagant ſon. I promiſed to comply with his requeſt. Now, if our friend ſhould never return home again, as I hope he will, I purpoſe to reſtore it to him untouched; if not, or that he ſhould delay his return for any very conſiderable time, I intend to make uſe of part of it to portion out his daughter to ſome perſon I ſhall think a ſuitable match for her.

MEANWELL.

Good heavens! what do I hear? How great is my joy and ſatisfaction to find you, my old friend, more worthy, than ever, of the affection I have always had for you. But can you forgive the unjuſt and cruel ſuſpicions I have entertain'd of you? Let me embrace you in token of reconciliation.

ALLWORTHY.

ALLWORTHY.

Moſt gladly: but give me leave to finiſh what I was ſaying. This idle young man, Leander, was on the point of rendering his father's wife precaution of none effect, by his own heedleſs extravagance. You muſt know, that this libertine, finding himſelf bereft of all reſources, took it into his head, about the latter end of laſt year, to advertiſe this houſe for ſale. There was no want of bidders, as you may ſuppoſe. Now, I would aſk you, what you would have done, had you been in my place at this critical conjuncture? Ought I to have ſuffer'd the treaſure, which the father of this wild young man had ſo carefully and prudently concealed, to paſs into the hands of a ſtranger?

MEANWELL.

The very thought makes me ſhudder!

ALLWORTHY.

Well then, I made all imaginable haſte to be before hand with all thoſe who offer'd to buy it; and paid my own money for the purchaſe of the houſe, in order to ſave my friend's: and, in order to preſerve it entire for him, have, ever ſince, liv'd upon the ſpot myſelf. Say now, am I the baſe, the avaricious wretch you took me for? Am I a perſon to betray the truſt repos'd in me, or make an advantage to myſelf from the misfortunes of my friend?

MEANMELL.

For heaven's ſake, mr. Allworthy, do not redouble my confuſion by a repetition of my too raſh cenſures. I am ready to make you any reparation; and——

ALLWORTHY.

Well, then, nothing remains but for me to conjure you, by all the ties of honour, to join with me in ſupporting the intereſts of our abſent friend; and

and to assist me with your advice in whatever relates to the management of his children; for, believe me, they are in a critical situation.

MEANWELL.

You may depend upon finding me as faithful a counsellor, and as warm an assistant, as your heart can wish. Good God! what a weight have you freed me from! I live! I breathe! once more. Integrity and good faith are not yet banish'd from the world. Thou best of friends, farewell: I must now take my leave.

ALLWORTHY.

Be sure to keep our secret.

MEANWELL.

I would sooner part with my life. Once more, farewell, for a short time.

ALLWORTHY.

Well then, if you have nothing more to say to me, I'll go back into the house.

MEANWELL.

Let me not detain you. Adieu.

[*Exit* Allworthy *into the house.*

SCENE V.

MEANWELL, *Solus.*

Well; henceforward let who will trust those idle bablers, who are perpetually spreading false reports; and who, from the badness of their own hearts, are ever ready to put the most vile constructions on the actions of others. Such wretches deserve to be banished from society; and yet, I blush to say it, from the propensity to malice and scandal in this iniquitous age, they are received, and

and even careſſed, in the beſt families. If, hereafter, I am ever ſo ſtupid as to give ear to them, may all mankind judge as cruelly and falſely by me, as I have done by my worthy, honeſt friend.

[*Exit.*

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter HORTENSIA *and* JULIA.

HORTENSIA.

BUT why ſhould I bluſh?

JULIA.

Nay, that I aſk you: you certainly know better than me.

HORTENSIA.

Indeed, my dear, I know nothing about the matter.

JULIA.

I beg your pardon, my dear, but you do know ſomething about it, and ſo do I too.

HORTENSIA.

Pſha! now you are teazing.

JULIA.

What, fretful too! nay, then, I am confirm'd in it.

HORTENSIA.

Confirm'd in what?

JULIA.

In what I know.

HORTENSIA.

For heaven's ſake! what is it you know?

JULIA.

Why, I know, and ſo do you, that whenever Frederick meets you, he ſtands for a while like one thunderſtruck; then, recovering himſelf a little, makes

makes the moſt reſpectful bow, and, at the ſame time, darts ſuch tender expreſſive glances—ha! my dear! and you return him ſo profound a courteſy, accompanied with ſuch a bewitching ſmile—and then, when he is gone, you do ſo ſtare after him—ha! ha! ha!—Now, don't you know all this?

HORTENSIA.

And, pr'ythee, what ſignifies all this?

JULIA.

Why, it ſignifies, in my little judgment, that your eyes underſtand each other, and explain themſelves in the moſt eloquent manner imaginable; inſomuch, that I defie the moſt unconcern'd ſpectator not to underſtand them.

HORTENSIA.

I am ſure I don't underſtand what you would be at. Frederick never open'd his lips to me, in particular; and, as for his looks, and his reſpectful behaviour, I am but too ſure, that I am no more concern'd in them than another.

JULIA.

But too ſure! Well, the tone of voice that was utter'd in, is inexpreſſibly fine! Indeed, indeed, my dear, I mnſt tell you, once more, that you diſcover very plainly, that you and I mean the ſame thing.

HORTENSIA.

Nay, if you are bent upon attacking me in this manner, I muſt quit your company. [*Going.*]

JULIA.

Well then, good b'ye, my dear. But, ſtay, is not that Frederick I ſee coming this way?

[*Looking out.*]

HORTENSIA. [*Returning haſtily.*]

Frederick! where, where, my dear Julia?

JULIA.

JULIA.

Ha! ha! ha! it is not him; I was miſtaken.

HORTENSIA.

How can you delight in teazing me in this manner? not that I care a farthing for Frederick; but I do not love to be made a jeſt of.

JULIA.

Neither do I love to have a friend diſſemble with me. I think I know a thouſand reaſons why you ſhould not conceal any thing from me: and therefore, ſo long as you continue to with-hold your confidence, depend upon it I will never let you be at reſt.

HORTENSIA. [*Sighing.*]

Alas, my dear Julia!

JULIA.

Courage; one other little ſigh and then——Oh, they are the fineſt prefaces to a fond tale that can be.

HORTENSIA.

In ſhort, I find there's no ſuch thing as eſcaping. You are ſo clear-ſighted, and have ſuch a lively imagination, that it is impoſſible to keep a ſecret from you.

JULIA.

And why ſhould you wiſh to have any ſecrets with me?

HORTENSIA.

Why? ah, my dear! Suppoſe, now, we two ſhould prove to be rivals? who knows?—Frederick is ſo agreeable.

JULIA. [*Mimicking her.*]

Frederick is ſo agreeable! And you really think ſo, do you?

HORTENSIA.

I cannot deny it.

JULIA.

JULIA.

Then, to be as open with you, I do the ſame.

HORTENSIA.

Cruel that you are! can you own this to me?

JULIA.

Upon my word I can: but, fear nothing, my affections are already fix'd elſewhere.

HORTENSIA.

Are you in earneſt?

JULIA.

Quite ſo; and I make no ceremony of declaring it. I am not ſo very refin'd as your ladyſhip.

HORTENSIA.

And, pray, who is the happy mortal that has poſſeſſion of your heart?

JULIA.

Why, my dear, one who, of all mortals, is the leaſt deſerving of it; an inconſtant, a libertine, a ſpendthrift, a——

HORTENSIA.

I'll be hang'd if it is not my brother!

JULIA.

You have gueſs'd the very man.

HORTENSIA.

And do you really love him?

JULIA.

To diſtraction.

HORTENSIA.

Indeed I pity you.

JULIA.

I pity myſelf, child; but it ſignifies nothing: the man has certainly bewitch'd me: for, tho' I am no ſtranger to all his faults, which, heaven knows, are pretty numerous; yet there is ſomething

ſo agreeable in his figure, his air, his addreſs, and that happy impudence peculiar to himſelf; that I cannot help loving him in ſpite of reaſon and common ſenſe: and I would rather, a thouſand times, live wretched with him, than happy with any other man.

HORTENSIA.

You have an odd taſte.

JULIA.

I have o; and am he firſt to laugh at myſelf for it: but, let what will come of it, love him I do, and love him I ſhall.

HORTENSIA.

How different are our diſpoſitions! I love Frederick for that becoming modeſty and ſweetneſs, that———But, as I live, here he is coming this way! Lord! if he ſhould paſs us without taking any notice of us?

JULIA.

Do you ſtep aſide; I'll teaze him a little.

HORTENSIA.

But don't overdo it: he may, perhaps, be offended, and quit the place

JULIA.

Oh, never fear, my fair inamorata; I'll manage matters properly, I warrant me.

SCENE II.

Enter FREDERICK. [*Who paſſes by the ladies, bowing reſpectfully; and is going off, when* Julia *places herſelf between him and the door.*]

JULIA.

Sir, your very humble ſervant; I am extremely glad to ſee you.

FREDERICK.

FREDERICK.

Ladies, your moſt obedient——Madam, I am your moſt devoted. [*Here* Frederick *and* Hortenſia *bow and courteſy to each other with great ceremony*]

HORTENSIA.

Sir——

FREDERICK.

Madam——I am afraid, ladies, I am rather troubleſome, and interrupt your converſation.

JULIA.

A perſon of your merit, ſir, can never be troubleſome.

FREDERICK.

Madam, you do me infinite honour. I am afraid this lady will not be of your opinion.

[*Looking tenderly at* Hortenſia.]

JULIA.

Oh, I'll anſwer for her.

FREDERICK.

That is more than ſhe ſeems willing to do for herſelf: beſides, ſhe appears melancholy, and may perhaps chuſe to be in private.

HORTENSIA.

I beg, ſir, I may not be the means of driving you away. I am a little thoughtful, indeed, but——

FREDERICK.

I am afraid, madam, you have too much reaſon to be ſo, and——

JULIA.

You are greatly concern'd for it, I dare ſay.

FREDERICK.

Undoubtedly; it gives me the greateſt uneaſineſs.

JULIA.

The greateſt uneaſineſs, you ſay?

FREDERICK.

I do; and moſt ſincerely.

JULIA.

Then, ſir, I can aſſure you, as ſincerely, that this lady is as ſenſibly affected with the generous part you take in her concern.

FREDERICK.

I feel for her, more than I am able to expreſs.

JULIA.

You cannot afford her a more ſenſible pleaſure, than by thus ſympathiſing with her misfortunes.

FREDERICK.

Would to heaven it was in my power to alleviate them! The intereſt I take in all that relates to this lady—the eſteem—the regard—the veneration—the—the—in a word; I ſpeak from the ſincerity of a heart, that——

JULIA.

Nay, if we are come to the language of hearts, ſpeak for yourſelves, good folks; I'll be no longer interpreter for you.—[*To* Hortenſia.] Lord, child, why don't you thank the gentleman?

HORTENSIA.

Pr'ythee be quiet.—[*To* Frederick, *in a tender tone.*] Sir, it is impoſſible for me to expreſs the exceſs of my gratitude.

JULIA. [*To* Frederick.]

The exceſs of her gratitude! obſerve that; it is pretty ſtrong, I think.

HORTENSIA.

The moſt I can ſay is, that I have a due ſenſe of the generous concern you ſhew for my misfortunes;

tunes; and that there is nothing I deteſt ſo much as ingratitude.

JULIA.

Oh, I abominate it myſelf! and give me leave to aſſure you, ſir, that no one is more incapable of it than my fair friend, here, eſpecially in regard to you.

HORTENSIA.

In regard to any one whatever.

FREDERICK.

It is moſt certain, madam, that I have no pretence to any diſtinction from you; but permit me to aſſure you, that it is my greateſt ambition to be able to deſerve it.

JULIA.

An ambition worthy of you, and of this lady who inſpires it.

HORTENSIA.

Not in the leaſt. You flatter me, my friend.

FREDERICK.

Forgive me, madam, if, on this head, I give more credit to your fair friend, than to yourſelf; and if I was aſſured, that the warmth of my ſentiments would engage you to accept of my ſincere homage, I proteſt, I ſwear by all that's ſacred—— You heed me not, lovely Hortenſia!

JULIA. [*Aſide to* Hortenſia.]

Oaths and proteſtations! the converſation grows ſpirited; do not ſuffer it to drop.——[*Aloud*] Continue, ſir, I hear you; ſwear away!

HORTENSIA.

Dear ſir, don't you perceive that ſhe is making herſelf merry at my expence?

JULIA.

I am perſuaded the gentleman does not think I am ſpeaking ludicrouſly.

FREDERICK.

I firmly believe every-thing you ſay to me in favour of your charming friend; and my heart dictates ſtill more to me.

JULIA.

Why, I'll be hang'd, after all, if you do not love her.

FREDERICK.

Love her? I adore her! oblige me ſo far as to tell her ſo.

JULIA.

Nay, nay, I think you may take that trouble upon yourſelf.

FREDERICK.

But the reſpect——.

JULIA.

Piſha! fiddle-ſtick of reſpect! if you ſtand upon ceremony, you will never come to a right underſtanding together. Come, come, e'en make a round declaration at once.

FREDERICK.

But may I preſume it will be receiv'd?

JULIA, [*To* Hortenſia.]

Now for a pretty, obliging anſwer on your ſide.

HORTENSIA. [*In confuſion.*]

Sir——I——your merit——but——.

JULIA. [*To* Frederick.]

There, you ſee the thing is as plain as day-light.

FREDERICK. [*To* Hortenſia.]

Oh, proceed! one word—one kind, one tender word to bleſs me!

HORTENSIA.

What would you have me ſay to you?

JULIA.

You ſee, now, it is as I ſaid.

FREDERICK.

I have ſtill ſome doubt.

JULIA.

Well; you are an unaccountable man! can anything be more intelligible? when ſhe aſks you what you would have her ſay, it is as much as to tell you, ſhe's ready to ſay whatever you pleaſe.

FREDERICK.

My ſweet interpreteſs! will the charming Hortenſia abide by this explanation?

HORTENSIA.

Indeed, ſir, my friend, here, has ſo confus'd me by her vivacity; has ſo entangled me, that——

JULIA.

Confus'd! entangl'd! you have ſenſe enough, I am perſwaded, ſir, to make a proper application of theſe terms, and to take your meaſures accordingly: make but the attack, and I'll inſure you againſt a repulſe.

HORTENSIA.

Giddy creature!

SCENE III.

Enter a FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN. [*To* Julia.]

Madam, your father deſires your company.

JULIA.

I'll follow you. [*To* Frederick.] I am ſorry, ſir, I am oblig'd to leave you alone with this lady; but if her company ſhould grow diſagreeable, you have only to tell her ſo, and ſhe will leave you, and follow me.

HORTENSIA.

I ſhall take care and not tire the gentleman, for I ſhall go with you

FREDERICK.

Cruel Hortenſia! will you leave me, then, in this fatal uncertainty?

JULIA.

He calls you cruel! can you ſuffer that?

FOOTMAN. [*To* Julia.]

Madam, your father will be impatient.

JULIA.

Well, well, I am coming. Wait here, both of you, till I return; I ſhall be with you again inſtantly.

HORTENSIA.

I fancy your father wants me, too.——Sir, I take my leave of you for the preſent, and——

JULIA. [*To* Frederick.]

Mind that, for the preſent: now that is as much as to ſay, I hope I ſhall ſee you again very ſoon.

FREDERICK.

Before you leave me, fair Hortenſia, ſuffer me to declare to you, that I ſhall literally abide by the interpretations of your lovely friend.

HORTENSIA.

Sir, you may take them in what ſenſe you pleaſe.

JULIA.

And ſo we leave you with a carte blanche. Fill it up, as your imagination ſhall dictate to you; we'll ſign, be the articles never ſo favourable on your ſide—[*To* Hortenſia.] Come, once more take your leave, for the preſent! Ha! ha! ha!

HORTENSIA.

It is sufficient that you do it for me. [*Exeunt* Julia *and* Hortensia; *the latter curt'sying to* Frederick *with an obliging smile.*]

SCENE IV.

FREDERICK. [*Solus.*]

What a happy conformity do I find between the behaviour of Hortensia, and my own way of thinking! how her modesty and amiable bashfulness charm me! and how much preferable do they appear in my eyes, to the unrestrained levity of her friend! Yes, lovely Hortensia, you are born for me, as I flatter myself I am for you; and I doubt not but this mutual sympathy will in time bring about an union that will render us both happy. But alas! how do I know that my father will look upon my intentions with a favourable eye? This is the only obstacle to my hopes; but I will apply myself so assiduously to inspire him with favourable sentiments of this deserving maid, that I flatter myself he will give his consent.—But here he is, and the sight of him, at this time, gives me emotion of a nature, far different from any it ever yet inspired. But let me not despond: he loves me; he has a generous heart, and I may expect every thing from that tenderness, and generosity.

SCENE V.

Enter MEANWELL.

MEANWELL. [*Talking to himself.*]

Where can my son be? I have been seeking for him every where, and———

FREDERICK.

Here he is, ſir, ready to receive and obey any orders you pleaſe to give him.

MEANWELL.

I am ſufficiently convinc'd of your duty and obedience, Frederick; and therefore do not doubt but you will obſerve what I am now going to ſay to you: We live in a ſtrange neighbourhood; a very ſtrange neighbourhood, ſon! of which I have, for a conſiderable time, dreaded the infection. I have obſerv'd you to walk very frequently up and down before the door of a houſe, from whence the moſt morbid and fatal effects may ariſe to a young man of your age. Evil example is a contagion that ſpreads farther than the plague, and does infinitely more miſchief in a leſs time.

FREDERICK.

Permit me to aſſure you, ſir——Alas! I dread your anger—and cannot explain myſelf.

MEANWELL.

Speak out; I know the goodneſs of thy heart, my boy, and therefore cannot ſuſpect thee of a baſe deſign to deceive your father. Speak out, then, and tell me what you have to ſay in behalf of that houſe, the manſion of riot, folly, and extravagance!

FREDERICK.

That houſe, ſir, conceals a treaſure——

MEANWELL. [*Aſide.*]

A treaſure! ſure he has not got wind of our ſecret!

FREDERICK.

Of which I moſt ardently deſire to be poſſeſt.

MEANWELL.

That houſe conceal a treaſure! pr'ythee, who could have told thee ſo?——I fear you have been impos'd upon.

FREDERICK.

FREDERICK.

No, ſir; my eyes, my own eyes have convinc'd me of the truth of what I aſſert; and my heart——

MEANWELL.

Indeed, ſon, you ſeem to be very quick-ſighted, not to ſay ſelfiſh: I could not have thought you had ſuch a paſſion for riches! I look'd upon you as a young philoſopher.

FREDERICK.

Riches! I, ſir, a paſſion for riches? I do not underſtand you.

MEANWELL.

Why, was not you talking of a treaſure that——

FREDERICK.

Dear ſir, the perſon I mean has neither treaſure nor fortune, but that which beauty and virtue brings with them. Theſe, ſir, are the riches my eyes and heart have diſcover'd: they are kept carefully conceal'd in this houſe; and it is my greateſt ambition to bring them out of this obſcurity, and ſet them forth to the world for univerſal admiration; and in this, relying upon your tenderneſs and indulgence, and your love for virtue, I preſume to aſk your aſſiſtance.

MEANWELL.

Ha! ha! ha! if you knew all, my dear Frederick, you would not be ſurpriz'd at my having miſtaken your meaning——Forgive the reproaches I made you, from a ſuppoſition that—But enough of this; let us come to the point: if I rightly underſtand you, you are ſpeaking of Hortenſia, daughter to old mr. Bellair.

FREDERICK.

I tremble to acknowledge it.

MEANWELL.

And why ſo?

FREDERICK.

You muſt certainly gueſs my reaſon, ſir.

MEANWELL.

Indeed, not I.

FREDERICK.

She is a moſt amiable young creature; but I fear that the misfortunes of her family———

MEANWELL.

Can you think of taking a young woman to your wife, who has nothing to recommend her but her beauty and virtue?

FREDERICK.

Let me ſay it, without offending you; this is the ſole ambition of my heart.

MEANWELL.

But have you well weigh'd the conſequences of ſo delicate an affair?

FREDERICK.

I have, ſir, maturely conſider'd it; it is not a deſign form'd in haſte, or the effects of a giddy paſſion. Intereſt, I know, oppoſes it; but that is too mean and ſelfiſh a conſideration for me to attend to.

MEANWELL.

Are theſe your real ſentiments?

FREDERICK.

They are. And the charms and merit of Hortenſia overbalance all mercenary views in my heart.

MEANWELL.

Come to my arms, my boy, and let me embrace thee. Hear me, Frederick: had you thought in any other manner, I ſhould have been the firſt to deſpiſe you. I am overjoy'd at the noble ſentiments you expreſs, and will this inſtant ſet about procuring for you the object of your happineſs.

FREDERICK,

FREDERICK. [*Throwing himself on his knees.*]

Oh, sir! how shall your son express the overflowings of his gratitude for this unparalell'd goodness and generosity. Accept, accept, all that love, duty, gratitude and obedience can dictate; and let me thus——

MEANWELL.

Rise, my son; I cannot do too much for so deserving a child: return back to the house, and I will this instant go in search of young Bellair, and ask his consent; for without that, his sister cannot marry: and considering the desperate condition to which he has reduc'd himself and family, he will gladly embrace the offer.

FREDERICK.

I shall wait your return with the utmost impatience.

MEANWELL.

Do so——[*Exit* Frederick.] How happy is that man, who has a son thus worthy of his parental fondness. Hey-day! what does this figure want with me?

SCENE VI.

Enter FRONT.

FRONT.

This figure, sir, has the honour to assure you, that he is your most obedient, most respectful, and most devoted humble servant.

MEANWELL.

Pray, friend, how do you call yourself?

FRONT.

Front, sir, at your service.

MEANWELL.

Well, mr. Front; and pray what may be your occupation?

FRONT.

FRONT.

Why, ſir, mine is a kind of mixed profeſſion: half military, half mercantile.

MEANWELL.

Oh, ho, I underſtand you; you follow the worſhipful employ of ſutler to a camp, I preſume.

FRONT.

Sometimes; but that is by ſtratagem.

MEANWELL.

Nay, now I muſt confeſs I am in the dark again.

FRONT.

Well, then, I'll explain myſelf: you muſt know, ſir, that as having travell'd a great deal, and ſeen many foreign countries, in which I have pick'd up a ſmattering of ſeveral different languages, I undertook the honourable function of a ſpy, in which I acquitted myſelf with no ſmall ſhare of reputation. Thro' a thouſand dangers and difficulties, I uſed to get into the enemy's camp in the diſguiſe of a travelling merchant; and under pretence of diſpoſing of my goods, made my obſervations, and frequently picked up ſeveral intereſting pieces of intelligence.

MEANWELL.

This trade muſt have brought you in a great deal of money.

FRONT.

It did ſo, to be ſure. I got a very genteel and comfortable ſubſiſtence by it; but it would not do for all that.

MEANWELL.

Not do?

FRONT.

Oh Lord, no! for you muſt know, I was twice within an ace of——[*Making ſigns of being hang'd.*]

MEANWELL.

MEANWELL.

Of going to the gallows?

FRONT.

Even ſo. The laſt eſcape I had, coſt me all my merchandiſe; and from that time, I took an oath to lay aſide artifice, and to engage my enemy face to face.

MEANWELL.

The moſt generous reſolve of the two.

FRONT.

So I join'd our army on the Rhine, and there was preſently rais'd to a command.

MEANWELL.

How a command?

FRONT.

Yes, ſir; a colonel, an intimate friend of your's, did me the honour of truſting his horſes to my care; and I may ſay, without vanity, that I conſtantly led them into the field during the laſt campaign.

MEANWELL.

Oh, ho! then I preſume, mr. Front, you may be the perſon whom my friend, the colonel, recommended to my ſervice; and for whoſe fidelity, he ſaid, he would be anſwerable.

FRONT.

Yes, ſir; and as he has a very great regard for you, he thought he could not give you a more convincing proof of it, than by engaging me in your ſervice, as this letter, I preſume, will inform you. [*Gives* Meanwell *a letter, who opens it, and reads.*]

"The bearer of this letter, is the young fel-
"low I was mentioning to you the other
"day, and whom I would recommend to
"you to take into your ſervice."

FRONT.

FRONT.

You find, ſir, the colonel is a judge of merit, and loves to do it juſtice.

MEANWELL.

You might have waited for this panegyric from another hand, without being at the trouble of making it yourſelf.

FRONT.

Why, ſir, as I know mankind are ſeldom fond of ſaying any good of one another, I generally take care to be before-hand in my own commendation. Beſides, it may be neceſſary to prevent miſtakes, to let you know, I am ſome degrees remov'd above the vulgar; and that as to wit and merit, I think I may defy———

MEANWELL.

Pray, good important ſir, give me leave to finiſh reading the letter.

FRONT.

I am mute, ſir: ſilent as the grave.

MEANWELL. [*Reads.*]

"At any time that you find yourſelf inclinable
"to be dull, ſend for ſignor Front; and if
"he does not divert you, ſend him back
"to me. If you ſhould at any time be at
"a loſs for terms to expreſs yourſelf, he
"will ſupply you with as many, and of
"whatever kind you pleaſe. In a word, I
"dont know his fellow for archneſs and
"humour."

But pray, good mr. Front, what ſecurity can you give for your good behaviour? gentlemen of your profeſſion are very apt to be a little light finger'd.

FRONT.

Why, ſir, tho' few perſons are more ready at a dextrous turn, than myſelf, yet I never put my talents in uſe but for my recreation.

MEANWELL.

But perhaps you may chuſe to exerciſe thoſe talents at my expence, and that will moſt certainly bring your expert worſhip to—[*Making the ſame ſigns as* Front *did ſome time before.*]

FRONT.

There is no danger, ſir. Like the gentlemen of the road, I always ſpare the houſes that give me entertainment. Aſk my character of your friend the colonel.

MEANWELL,

He anſwers, indeed, for your fidelity.

FRONT.

Only put a confidence in me, ſir, and you ſhall find me ſtaunch; but if you diſtruſt me, look to yourſelf: I'll deceive you, in ſpite of your teeth.

MEANWELL.

Thou art an original, that is moſt certain.

FRONT.

I ſhould be ſorry to be any other; your copyers are the moſt inſipid animals exiſting.

MEANWELL.

Well, follow me; I am pleas'd with thy humour, and will endeavour to put confidence in thee: but tell you before-hand, if I catch you cheating me, I will treat you as a ſpy, and tuck you up without any further ceremony.

[*Exit* Meanwell; Front *following him.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter Young BELLAIR *and* PACE.

Young BELLAIR.

DO you know, mr. Pace, that I will be put off no longer, and inſiſt upon your giving me an exact account of the money I committed to your charge? how much is there remaining?

PACE.

In truth ſir, the ſum will not overburden you. Indeed, indeed, my good maſter, you are a very extraordinary perſonage; you firſt ſpend all your money, and then begin to reckon it. This is ſhutting the ſtable door, when the ſteed is ſtolen.

Young BELLAIR.

Truce with your proverbs if you pleaſe, and give me the account I ordered you to draw out.

PACE.

Lord, ſir! I am thinking if my old maſter ſhould come home, what a piece of work here would be. My God! what would he ſay, to find his houſe ſold, and all the money ſpent?

Young BELLAIR.

My account!

PACE.

What a noiſe would here be! 'Slife! the very thought of it makes my ears tingle.

Young BELLAIR.

My account, I ſay.

PACE.

PACE.

And then the poor old ſoul has not a place to put his head in; he muſt take up his lodgings with the fowls of the air, unleſs he will accept of part our little room in the court-yard, and that you know——

Young BELLAIR.

Once more my account!. or——

PACE.

Oh, your account? your account? why——here it is, if you will have it. It is a curious piece I'll aſſure you, I'll read it to you. [*Pulling out a long roll of paper.*]

Young BELLAIR.

It ſeems to be furiouſly blotted and interlined.

PACE.

Pardon me ſir, nothing can be more clear or better digeſted, I divided it into three parts.

Young BELLAIR.

Zounds! you are very methodical.

PACE.

Oh, ſir! there is nothing like method in accounts; it ſatisfies all parties.

Young BELLAIR.

Pray let me ſee this curious piece.

PACE.

In the firſt place, I range your expences under three ſeveral heads.

Young BELLAIR.

Namely ——

PACE.

The Table.

Young BELLAIR.

Well.

PACE.

Play.

Young

Young BELLAIR.

Proceed.

PACE.

And Women. Theſe, you know, are the three principal avocations of your life, and conſequently make the chief heads of my account.

Young BELLAIR.

This raſcal has ſome wit about him.

PACE.

And honeſty too, as you ſhall ſee. For your table, [*Reading*] imprimis———

Young BELLAIR.

Why not, firſt?

PACE.

Oh Lord ſir, imprimis ſounds much better.

Young BELLAIR.

What, a pedant too! this is ſomething extraordinary in a valet.

PACE.

Pedant or not, as you pleaſe. Imprimis, I ſay, for a year's rent for your little ſummer ſeat; gardener's wages, and maintainance of himſelf and family, one hundred pounds. Secundo, for private entertainments and merry-makings, given at different times at the ſaid houſe, after having ſold your own, five hundred pounds.

Young BELLAIR.

That damn'd houſe has been the ruin of me.

PACE.

And will be of many others. As it is all over with us now, I have diſcharged it, and here is the receipt for the rent.

Young BELLAIR.

Very well.

PACE.

PACE.

Tertio, for three cold ſuppers, ſent by your orders to mrs.———; you know where I mean.

Young BELLAIR.

Yes, yes, go on.

PACE.

Thirty pounds; liquor, you know, included.

Young BELLAIR.

Well, well! no matter, we were elegantly ſerved.

PACE.

Quarto, for a ball and entertainment, that laſted a whole night and a day in the public gardens at Boulogne, two hundred and twenty five pounds; you know that you had at leaſt twenty perſons of the firſt diſtinction there, without reckoning our two ſelves.

Young BELLAIR.

Go on.

PACE.

Quinto, for our own private table, ſince the ſelling of our houſe as aforeſaid, three hundred and fifty pounds ſome odd ſhillings.——N. B. A great number of ſmarts, bucks, bloods, and choice ſpirits, uſed to come in a free manner to partake of our ordinary, who had all of them excellent ſtomachs, and———

Young BELLAIR.

Speak not of them but with reſpect, they are illuſtrious ſouls.

PACE.

Total expence for the table, during three months, eight hundred and fifty pounds.——What think you of that?

Young BELLAIR.

I have nothing to ſay againſt it.

PACE.

PACE.

Now for the article of play: At one ſitting fifteen hundred pounds. This article is conciſe, but pretty heavy. What the duce could poſſeſs you to ſit down to hazard?

Young BELLAIR.

It was the moſt fooliſh action I ever committed.

PACE.

And that is ſaying a great deal; but to go on. Third article, women.

Young BELLAIR.

That is an article of expence I ſhall never again incur, I am reſolved henceforward to confine myſelf to one.

PACE.

And even that is one too much.

"Deceitful ſex, your triumph now is o'er."

Young BELLAIR.

Truce with your flights, and continue your account.

PACE.

I have juſt done, ſir: To miſs ——— I have left her name blank, leſt your account ſhould fall into another hand. Made over to this lady, an aſſignment for two hundred pounds, in conſideration for her giving up a promiſe of marriage made to her by your honour over your cups.

Young BELLAIR.

I remember it.

PACE.

Item, to her maid, fifty pounds.

Young BELLAIR.

Fifty pounds to her maid! I never owed her any thing.

PACE.

But I did, ſir, and that was the ſame thing; for while

while you was ſigning a contract with her miſtreſs above ſtairs, I was ſealing below; and ſo your honour was engaged for me as well as yourſelf; would you have had me have marry'd an Abigail?

Young BELLAIR.

Oh! to be ſure, I ſhould never think of degrading mr. Pace in that manner; but proceed.

PACE.

Item, for pompons, ribbands, gloves, fans, tippets, ſcarfs, muffs, and other trifling preſents ſent to the abovenamed lady by your order, two hundred pounds.

Young BELLAIR.

That is a plaugy deal of money, for knick-knacks.

PACE.

You know, ſir, far fetched and dear bought, ſays the proverb, and now-a-days nothing is ſo much run after as knick-knacks: They are the taſte of the age. Who ſo fond of them as yourſelf! witneſs the ſums you have ſquandered upon Italian ſingers and dancers.

Young BELLAIR.

I confeſs it to my ſhame.

PACE.

Item, for the marriage expences of your gardener's daughter, (oh, the pretty rogue!) twenty pounds, and to portion her out, one hundred and fifty more.

Young BELLAIR.

That money was well laid out.

PACE.

It was ſo, for you was the occaſion of the girl's being in ſuch a hurry for a huſband——Total of all expences, two thouſand nine hundred and ſeventy pounds.

Young

Young BELLAIR.

Well, well, I won't ſtand with you for a trifle, I find by your own account, there is coming to me, one hundred and thirty pounds.

PACE.

But hold, here's an article I had forgot: For a note of hand paid for mr. Shuffle, two hundred pounds; upon your joining with him in a note, you know his creditors releaſed him; and as ſoon as the cage was open, the bird took his flight, and would have left you to have filled his place, if I had not raiſed the money.

Young BELLAIR.

Well, I do not repent of having done that good action; he raiſed my compaſſion in ſuch a manner, that I could not help being ſecurity for him.

PACE.

Mighty well! I find you can have compaſſion for others, tho' you have none for yourſelf.

Young BELLAIR.

So then, we have no money after all?

PACE.

Not a ſouſe, and you are near ſeventy pounds in my debt: I have lived by my wits theſe three days.

Young BLLEAIR.

I am in much the ſame caſe, I know not where to put my head.

PACE.

E'en let us go down to your farm in the country, and live upon that till we can get ſomething better. But mum! here comes old mr. Meanwell.

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter MEANWELL.

MEANWELL.

My ſon and I have been ſeeking you this hour, mr. Bellair.

Young BELLAIR.

Indeed? I muſt confeſs you ſurpriſe me; for I think we are not very fond of each other's company.

MEANWELL.

Be that as it may, circumſtances, you know, ſometimes bring together thoſe of the moſt oppoſite diſpoſitions. I have ſomething of great importance to propoſe. Pleaſe to order your ſervant to withdraw.

Young BELLAIR.

I keep nothing ſecret from him.

PACE.

As I could convince you, by ſome proofs that would ſurprize you.

MEANWELL.

And not greatly edify me. However, ſince it is your maſter's pleaſure, you may remain.

Young BELLAIR.

You ſeem to have the air of intending me a lecture!

MEANWELL.

Not I, indeed.

PACE.

I am heartily glad of it; for it would only be ſo much loſt time.

MEANWELL.

Truly I am of your opinion.

Young BELLAIR.

Well, now to your buſineſs.

MEANWELL.

You muſt know then, that, at my ſon's requeſt, I am come to make a propoſal to you, which, I am perſuaded, you will be greatly pleaſed with.

Young BELLAIR.

We ſhall ſee.

MEANWELL.

Frederick has a great eſteem for your ſiſter Hortenſia; and has earneſtly entreated me to aſk her of you in marriage. Will you give your conſent?

Young BELLAIR.

You do us both a great deal of honour; but my ſiſter is by no means a ſuitable match for your ſon; and therefore I would adviſe you to ſeek elſewhere.

PACE. [*Aſide to* Young Bellair.]

Zounds, ſir! are you out of your ſenſes, to refuſe ſuch an offer for your ſiſter?

Young BELLAIR.

Peace, raſcal!

PACE. [*Aſide to* Young Bellair.]

But do you conſider, after this alliance, the father and the ſon will lend us money at a dead lift?

Young BELLAIR.

Hold your tongue, or I'll———

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

What curſed whim has taken him now?

MEANWELL.

I muſt confeſs I expected a more obliging anſwer. Are you not ſatisfy'd, mr. Bellair, with having ruin'd your own fortune, but you muſt oppoſe the making of your ſiſter's?

PACE.

He's beſide himſelf to be ſure.

Young BELLAIR.

Hang-dog! if I hear another word out of your lips, I'll ſtrangle thee.

PACE.

With all my heart: I'll ſpeak my mind for all that.

MEANWELL.

Pray, let us come to an explanation. What is your reaſon for ſaying that Hortenſia is not a ſuitable match for my ſon?

Young BELLAIR.

Becauſe he will have a large fortune, and ſhe has none.

MEANWELL.

Is that all the difficulty?

Young BELLAIR.

And an inſurmountable one, I aſſure you.

MEANWELL.

No ſuch thing: we only aſk your ſiſter. My ſon is willing to marry her without a fortune. I applaud his intention, and have given him my conſent; ſo that there is only your's wanting.

Young BELLAIR.

Mr. Meanwell, notwithſtanding I have a full ſenſe of your generoſity, yet neither my ſiſter nor myſelf can profit by it.

MEANWELL.

Why ſo?

Young BELLAIR.

Becauſe it would reflect eternal diſgrace upon her to marry into ſo rich a family as yours without bringing any thing of her own; neither ſhould I be able to ſurvive the ſhame: therefore, ſir, you muſt

excuſe me, if I refuſe my conſent, unleſs I give my ſiſter ſome little fortune.

PACE.

And where the devil are you to find it?

Young BELLAIR.

I know where it is to be had.

MEANWELL. [*Aſide.*]

Sure he has no notion of the money that's hid?

Young BELLAIR.

All that I have left of my ſhatter'd fortune is a ſmall eſtate in Normandy; this I will ſettle upon my ſiſter for her portion: I wiſh it were more conſiderable; but ſtill it is not deſpicable.

PACE.

How! are you going to part with your lands, the only reſource you have left? what are we to live upon when they are gone?

Young BELLAIR.

Providence will provide.

PACE.

Fine truſting to Providence indeed! we have deſerv'd ſo well of it.

Young BELLAIR.

Was I to ſtarve for want, I would abide by the reſolution I have made. So, mr. Meanwell, if you like my propoſal, well; if not, there the affair ends.

MEANWELL.

Do you think that I will ever agree to ſet the finiſhing hand to your ruin? What will the world ſay of me? what will your father ſay when he returns? No, no; I'll conſent to no ſuch thing.

PACE. [*Aſide to* Meanwell.]

For heaven's ſake, ſir, keep firm to that.

Young

Young BELLAIR.

Let me entreat you, ſir, to accept this offer; You cannot do me a more ſenſible pleaſure.

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

The devil's in him, to be ſure!

MEANWELL.

It is what I will never conſent to.

Young BELLAIR.

I earneſtly entreat you to do it.

PACE. [*Aſide to* Young Bellair.]

Let me talk to him a little; you ſhall ſee I'll bring him round.

Young BELLAIR.

Do ſo, and you'll oblige me.

PACE. [*To* Meanwell.]

Sir, will you give me leave to ſay a word or two to you in private?

MEANWELL.

With all my heart.

PACE.

Step a little this way, if you pleaſe, ſir.——Further yet—There.

MEANWELL.

Well, what have you to ſay?

PACE. [*In a low voice.*]

Why, ſir, the eſtate he offers you is the moſt curſed thing that ever man had in his hands.

MEANWELL.

You don't tell me ſo?

PACE.

Ay, and ſeriouſly too. Why, ſir, it is nothing but flint and ſtones: nothing in the world will grow upon it.

MEANWELL.

The devil!

Young BELLAIR.

Have you done?

PACE.

Have a little patience——[*To* Meanwell.] Lord ſir, it produces nothing but thiſtles and ſows ear.

MEANWELL.

A curious harveſt! He ſhould ſow knavery there, and it would yield a plentiful crop.

PACE.

Very true, ſir.

Young BELLAIR.

Come, make haſte; I loſe all patience.

PACE.

But this is not the worſt, ſir; for you muſt know that this ſame eſtate has been fatal to every one it has belong'd to. Some have run out all they had, and others have hang'd themſelves.

MEANWELL.

Nay, now you are jeſting with me.

PACE.

Not I, upon my honour, ſir; I never was more ſerious in my life. I know that my maſter lays all his ruin to it; and that is the reaſon he wants to get rid of it at any rate. I tell you this, ſir, in confidence, and becauſe I would not ſee you impoſed upon: and I hope you are a gentleman of too much honour to betray me to my maſter, ſir.—

MEANWELL.

I ſhall hardly think of repeating all this ſtuff.

PACE. [*Aſide to* Young Bellair.]

I have uſed all my endeavours to perſuade him to comply; but he ſtill holds out.

Young

Young BELLAIR. [*To* Meanwell.]
What Pace has been ſaying to you, I find——

MEANWELL.
Has made no impreſſion on me. However——

PACE. [*Aſide to* Meanwell.]
If you will not believe me, I am ſorry for it; but I have nothing to reproach myſelf with: I have told the plain truth.

Young BELLAIR.
And ſo you will not accept of this eſtate?

MEANWELL.
Indeed, no.

PACE.
No, no, I'll anſwer for him.

Young BELLAIR.
How do you mean?

PACE.
Why, he is reſolv'd not to be behind with you in generoſity. Oh, he has a ſpirit!——ſuch a ſpirit, if you knew all——

Young BELLAIR.
To cut the matter ſhort; if you will not accept my eſtate, I will not give my ſiſter to your ſon.

PACE.
Did not I tell you ſo? Will you believe me another time?

MEANWELL.
Upon my word I'm at a loſs to know what to think of this obſtinacy; it ſeems forc'd.

Young BELLAIR.
Forc'd or not, I'm fix'd.

MEANWELL.
And this is your final anſwer?

Young BELLAIR.

It is.

MEANWELL.

Then I'll take my leave.

PACE. [*Aside.*]

I breathe once more. Our poor dear eſtate is ſafe ſtill.

MEANWELL.

Conſider well of this affair before we part.

Young BELLAIR.

The more I conſider, the more determin'd I ſhall be. Your ſervant.

MEANWELL.

My ſon ſhall pay you a viſit; perhaps he may ſucceed better than I have been able to do.

Young BELLAIR.

I aſſure you, upon my honour, that he, nor any one breathing, ſhall not make me alter my preſent way of thinking. Adieu.

[*Exeunt* Young Bellair *and* Pace.]

MEANWELL.

What an unaccountable man is this! what a ſtrange compound of good and bad qualities! How is it poſſible ſuch an abandon'd libertine ſhould be capable of thinking and acting ſo nobly? I muſt endeavour to ſee my friend Allworthy: he may help us, perhaps, to get over this obſtacle; and—in a lucky moment, here he comes!

SCENE III.

Enter ALLWORTHY.

ALLWORTHY.

Mr. Meanwell, is it you? will you walk in?

MEANWELL.

MEANWELL.

No, I thank you; we can talk more privately here. I have a thouſand things to ſay to you—— You know my ſon?

ALLWORTHY.

I do. He's the very contraſt of our libertine, here.

MEANWELL.

Well; this ſon, ſo prudent, ſo circumſpect——

ALLWORTHY.

Has been guilty of ſome folly, I ſuppoſe. Well, well.

MEANWELL.

He has indeed; and the greateſt of all follies.

ALLWORTHY.

How? Heaven forbid!

MEANWELL.

He's over head and ears in love.

ALLWORTHY.

Indeed! and with whom?

MEANWELL.

Why, with the daughter of our poor friend.

ALLWORTHY.

Hortenſia?

MEANWELL.

The ſame.

ALLWORTHY.

Upon my word I am rejoic'd to hear it. It ſhall be a wedding whenever you pleaſe.

MEANWELL.

Not ſo ſoon as you think.

ALLWORTHY.

Why, what is to retard it, if I give my conſent?

MEANWELL.

We muſt have her brother's conſent too.

ALLWORTHY.

Well, and what prevents him from giving it?

MEANWELL.

A reaſon that you will little imagine. We offer'd him to take Hortenſia without a portion, and he inſiſted upon giving her one. Unleſs we would accept of his eſtate in Normandy with his ſiſter, he would not give his conſent to the marriage. Now, we were reſolv'd to have only his ſiſter without his eſtate; and ſo we parted.

ALLWORTHY.

So that a mutual generoſity prevented you from coming to an agreement.

MEANWELL.

You are right. However, I have ſome reaſon to believe, that he has another motive than generoſity for wanting to ſaddle us with his eſtate; for I am aſſured that it is a moſt deteſtable ſpot; that the ſoil produces nothing but ſtones and weeds; and, in ſhort, that no one ever thriv'd that has had any thing to do with it.

ALLWORTHY.

And, pray, who told you this fine tale?

MEANWELL.

His own man, Pace. At firſt I did not mind what he ſaid, tho' he told it me in confidence: but young Bellair's inſiſting ſo much upon our taking it, confirm'd what the other ſaid.

ALLWORTHY.

Well, I ſee men of the greateſt underſtanding may be eaſily made the dupes of artful knaves. This raſcal has groſsly impoſed upon you. The eſtate is in as good condition as can be deſir'd. It

is

is worth, at leaſt, two hundred a year: and it would have been ſold long ago, if I had not prevented it underhand.

MEANWELL.

Well, I believe what you ſay, and this is an additional reaſon for me to refuſe the offer made us of it, ſince it may ſerve as a petty proviſion for young Bellair, now the reſt of his fortune is ſpent.

ALLWORTHY.

My dear friend, it would hardly ſerve him to defray the expences of a day.

MEANWELL.

I have a thought come into my head, which may bring matters about in a manner agreeable to all parties.

ALLWORTHY.

What is it?

MEANWELL.

Cannot you tell him, that his father left a ſum of money with you to portion out his daughter?

ALLWORTHY.

I could ſo: and, agreeable to the intention of my abſent friend, I think I may take ſix thouſand pounds out of the ſum I have conceal'd, and give it to his beloved child for her portion: but then, I cannot beſtow it on your ſon, without young Bellair's knowledge; and, if once he ſhould diſcover, that his father had left any money in charge with me, he might oblige me to give it to him.

MEANWELL.

That is true——But ſtay——I have it!——The ſcheme is indeed rather too ludicrous for people of our years, but it is an excellent good one—Yes, yes, it will certainly rid us of all difficulties.

ALLWORTHY,

ALLWORTHY.

I am all impatience to know what it is.

MEANWELL.

Liſten then. You muſt know that I have juſt taken into my ſervice, one Front, a fellow who is recommended to me by an old friend, an officer of diſtinction now retired from ſervice, who brought this genius home with him from Germany. He's a fellow of excellent parts and addreſs; and no one knows any thing of him in town, as yet.

ALLWORTHY.

Well, but what has this fellow to do with our affair?

MEANWELL.

You will hear. I intend to dreſs him in a ſea-habit, and make him paſs for the captain of a merchant-ſhip juſt arrived from Pondicherry in the Eaſt Indies.

ALLWORTHY.

I'm as much to ſeek as ever.

MEANWELL.

Patience. This ſham captain ſhall pretend to be an intimate friend and acquaintance of old mr. Bellair, who, by the ſtory that I will put into his mouth, ſhall have made a large fortune in the Eaſt Indies, and have given him ſix thouſand pounds in bank notes, to depoſit in the hands of a broker, to pay to you for the uſe of his daughter Hortenſia, as a marriage-portion.

ALLWORTHY.

Upon my word, an admirable ſcheme! And your ſea-captain, I ſuppoſe, is to throw himſelf in young Bellair's way, to tell him this fine ſtory, and———

MEANWELL.

You have it, I'll go directly and give our captain his inſtructions. In the mean time, do you place the ſum agreed upon ready in the broker's hands, and take a receipt of him for it, which the captain ſhall ſhow to our libertine; who, when he finds his ſiſter has ſo genteel a proviſion, will make no difficulty of conſenting to her marriage with my ſon.

ALLWORTHY.

I'll directly ſet about executing my part in this affair; and make not the leaſt doubt——

MEANWELL.

Huſh! here comes that raſcal Pace. Detain him here for ſome time in converſation, and I'll take the opportunity to go and prepare the captain.

ALLWORTHY.

Leave us, leave us. [*Exit* Meanwell.]

SCENE IV.

Enter PACE.

PACE.

Notwithſtanding your having forbid me to appear before you again, ſir, I thought it my duty to wait on you, to acquaint you of what has lately happen'd. My maſter, ſir, is determined to make away with his eſtate in the country.

ALLWORTHY.

Indeed! is he going to ſell it?

PACE.

No, ſir, he is going to give it away.

ALLWORTHY.

To give it away! to whom?

PACE.

PACE.

To his ſiſter, ſir, for her marriage portion.

ALLWORTHY.

And do you ſuffer that?

PACE.

I do all in my power to prevent it. I have been arguing with him this half hour, but he heeds me no more than if I was talking to a ſtatue; ſo I reſolv'd to come to you, in order to beſeech you, with all humility, to back me with your authority.

ALLWORTHY.

Me? I ſhall give myſelf no more concern about your affairs. Squander, loſe, give, ſpend, waſte and devour all you will, and as you will, what is it to me?

PACE.

Lord have mercy upon us, ſir! can you bear to let one of the beſt eſtates in Normandy go out of the family? an eſtate that is in the moſt flouriſhing condition; that yields a double crop, almoſt without any trouble. In ſhort, an eſtate that is worth its weight in gold.

ALLWORTHY.

Indeed! why you give me ſuch a character of it, as makes me have half a mind to purchaſe it. I fancy mr. Meanwell will hardly bid againſt me; do you think he will?

PACE.

Dear ſir, why do you aſk me?

ALLWORTHY.

Nay, nothing; only I fancy he is not fond of eſtates that have been fatal to all thoſe they have belong'd to.

PACE.

Ha! ha! ha! I ſee the old gentleman has ſwallow'd

low'd the bait. He has told you all that paſſed between us, I ſuppoſe.

ALLWORTHY.

He has ſo; and would not have it, if you would give it him for nothing.

PACE.

Well, for a wiſe man, he has but a weak head: is not that truth, ſir?

ALLWORTHY.

But there is a greater truth ſtill.

PACE.

What is that, pray ſir?

ALLWORTHY.

That you are the moſt impudent liar breathing.

PACE.

Faith, ſir, when a man's bread is concern'd, all means are lawful.

ALLWORTHY.

Well, well, you need be under no apprehenſion, for mr. Meanwell will not conclude the matter, till he knows whether old mr. Bellair is willing his daughter ſhould be marry'd.

PACE.

And how is he to know that?

ALLWORTHY.

By the captain of a ſhip, who is juſt arriv'd from Pondicherry, and has brought us letters from the old gentleman.

PACE.

Well; and what news?

ALLWORTHY.

We hear that old mr. Bellair is very well.

PACE.

Which makes me very ill, I am ſure.

ALLWORTHY.

And that we may expect to see him very soon.

PACE.

It's all over with me, then.

ALLWORTHY.

This same captain is now looking for thy master, to give him orders from his father.

PACE.

And I, sir, must beg you to give me your advice.

ALLWORTHY.

With all my heart.

PACE.

Which you think best for me to do; to inlist for a soldier, or hang myself?

ALLWORTHY.

Why really, my lad, of the two, I think you had best hang yourself; that's my opinion.

PACE.

May be so: but it does not happen to be mine. However, till I can determine upon one of the two, will you be so good to order me something to break my fast, of which I have great need, I assure you; for I am already half dead with hunger.

ALLWORTHY.

I am glad to hear it; for that will save you the trouble of hanging yourself. [*Exit* Allworthy.

SCENE V.

PACE [*Alone.*]

Your servant. The devil take such councellors, say I! what a malicious old scoundrel this is! how he diverted himself with my perplexity! but what

an

an aſs was I to believe what he ſaid? I'll be hang'd if the arrival of this captain of a ſhip is not ſome ſtory trump'd up between the two old fellows, to keep my maſter and I in awe: or, if there is any one come from Pondicherry, he certainly brings news of this ſame father of ours having taken a trip into the other world. Lord ſend it may be ſo! If the old fellow is dead, I am my own man again; if he's coming home, look to thyſelf, friend Pace; baſtinadoes will enſue, and thoſe out of number. But pox of fear! it belongs only to women and cowards. So fall back, fall edge, I am prepar'd to face the worſt. [*Exit.*

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter Young BELLAIR *and* PACE. FREDERICK *meeting them.*

FREDERICK.

STAY a little, mr. Bellair.

Young BELLAIR.

No preaching, I beſeech you.

FREDERICK.

My friendſhip will not ſuffer me to diſpenſe with it.

Young BELLAIR.

And my inclination will not permit me to give ear to it. Beſides, I am in haſte at preſent, and have no time to loſe.

FREDERICK.

I am ſorry to ſay it, mr. Bellair, you have loſt too much already.

Young BELLAIR.

May be ſo: but my moments are now precious; I have not one to ſpare.

PACE.

My maſter tells you the truth, indeed, ſir; for needs muſt when the devil drives, as the old ſaying is: and we are now poſt haſte in purſuit of a dinner, and have not been able to overtake it yet.

FREDERICK.

Well, ſtop your journey, then, you ſhall dine with me.

PACE.

PACE. [*To* Frederick.]

Take him at his word, ſir, and let us ſet ourſelves down to table; we may moralize there between the courſes.

Young BELLAIR.

Theſe mighty ſage people take away my ſtomach; and I had rather ſtarve, than be oblig'd to keep them company.

PACE.

Now I am not ſo very fond of ſtarving.

Young BELLAIR.

Make yourſelf eaſy, we will dine heartily and jovially together.

PACE.

Then make haſte and give the gentleman his anſwer.

Young BELLAIR.

That will be done in a trice. [*To* Frederick] Sir, your ſervant.

PACE.

Sir, your ſervant.

FREDERICK.

Nay, ſir, by heaven's you ſhall ſtay and hear me!

Young BELLAIR.

Well, what have you to ſay to me?

PACE.

Give me leave, ſir, to hint, that the ſhorter your diſcourſe, the better; for we are really and truly in a ſtate of faſting; and hunger, you know, has no ears.

FREDERICK.

Have but a little patience, and your wants ſhall be ſupply'd.——I know, my dear Bellair, that you have a generous and noble ſoul; and that your exceſſes have been owing to a miſtaken good-nature, which

which made you give way, without thinking, to any-thing propos'd to you by a ſet of people who deſpis'd you for your credulity. It is now high time to call in reſolution to your ſuccour, to open your eyes, and know your true friends.

Young BELLAIR.

And who are theſe true friends?

FREDERICK.

Thoſe who will give you good counſel.

PACE.

I had rather ſee thoſe who would give us a good dinner, and open their purſe-ſtrings to ſupply our empty pockets.

FREDERICK.

Do you want to know who is your real friend?

PACE.

Lord! have I not been telling it him?

FREDERICK.

No more raillery. The man who is really a friend, will always tell you the truth, and reprove you for your errors, how diſagreeable ſoever the hearing may be to you; but look on him as your bittereſt foe, who will conceal your follies, or encourage you in the purſuit of them.

PACE.

If what this gentleman ſays, is true, ſir, you have a number of enemies indeed.

FREDERICK.

Of which you are the chief.

PACE.

Me, ſir! nay, then, if I was to faſt till doom's-day, I muſt ſpeak the truth; and let mr. Bellair contradict me, if I ſay what is falſe: I am preaching to him from morning till night; and what do I get for

for my pains? Why, he laughs at me. This puts me out of countenance: and as I have a little pride about me, as well as my maſter, I had rather act like a madman, than paſs for a fool.

FREDERICK.

It is this falſe pride that makes ſo many fools. For my part, I am very ready to paſs for a fool, provided no one can impeach my morals. I know this is not talking or acting in the faſhionable way; and that the polite world, who make prudence and ſolidity their jeſt, will be ready to laugh at me for this antiquated way of thinking; but I deſpiſe their ſcoffing, and never will be perſuaded, that wiſdom and ſobriety are to be confin'd to grey hairs. Old age is no cure againſt folly, when it has grown up with us from our youth.

Young BELLAIR.

Have you almoſt done? you tire my patience: truce with your tedious morality, and reſume the buſineſs you came about.

FREDERICK.

Well, then, do you think I am your friend?

Young BELLAIR.

Moſt certainly.

FREDERICK.

And are you mine?

Young BELLAIR.

I am; ſo long as you forbear preaching.

FREDERICK,

Well, then, I promiſe you to give it over.

Young BELLAIR.

Then I am your friend to the end of my life.

FREDERICK.

Will you give me a proof I may depend on?

Young

Young BELLAIR.

Name it.

FREDERICK.

It is to give me your ſiſter, and not inſiſt upon my taking your eſtate with her, which I cannot accept with honour.

Young BELLAIR.

Nor can I, with honour, give her to you without it. Do you love Hortenſia?

FREDERICK.

Dear as my own ſoul.

Young BELLAIR.

Then lay aſide this falſe delicacy, otherwiſe ſhe ſhall never be your's.

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

Ah! it's all over with our poor eſtate now; love will ſend it packing.

FREDERICK.

I am ready to ſacrifice every-thing to my love for Hortenſia, except my honour. This is my laſt reſolve.

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

Egad, it's come back again.

Young BELLAIR.

If ſo, take your pleaſure.

FREDERICK.

It is done. Farewel. [*Exit* Frederick.

Young BELLAIR.

Your's.

SCENE II.

PACE.

Heaven make us thankful for pride, ſay I: I ſhall love it as long as I live. Pride took our eſtate from us, and pride has given it to us back again.

Young BELLAIR.

Ha! yonder is Julia with my ſiſter; they are coming this way: I'll ſeize the lucky opportunity of ſpeaking to her.

SCENE III.

Enter HORTENSIA *and* JULIA.

Young BELLAIR. [*To* Julia, *who is croſſing the ſtage.*]

Why do you fly me thus, adorable Julia? Siſter, let me entreat you to ſtop your lovely friend.

HORTENSIA. [*To* Julia.]

Stay one moment, I beſeech you.

JULIA.

Lord! you know I have no objection to it: but if my father ſhould come, and find me here, I am undone. He has forbidden me to ſpeak to mr. Bellair, and made me ſwear to obey his injunction. Would you have me be perjur'd?

Young BELLAIR.

For the ſake of a ſincere lover, it would be no great crime.

PACE. [*Repeating affectedly.*]

"Jove at lover's perjuries ſmiles."

Young BELLAIR.

Away, you impertinent raſcal! [*Puſhing him away.*]

PACE.

I beg your pardon, ſir, but it was at my tongue's end; and I ſhould have been choak'd, if it had not come out.

Young BELLAIR.

Too cruel fair one! ſhall a raſh and idle vow prevent you from ſpeaking to me?

HORTENSIA.

You ſee it does, brother. However, ſhe has not ſworn not to hear you.

JULIA.

True, my dear; and that is the moſt I can do for him.

Young BELLAIR. [*To* Julia.]

You no longer love me, then?

PACE.

Indeed you are miſtaken.

JULIA. [*To* Pace.]

Who deſired you to anſwer, pray?

PACE.

Your eyes, madam; of whom I take upon myſelf to be the interpreter.

JULIA.

My eyes are fools, then; and you are an impertinent blockhead. How do you know but they may lye?

PACE.

No, no, they ſpeak too plainly to lye.

JULIA.

Either make that fellow hold his tongue, or turn him out of the room.

Young BELLAIR.

Has your father forbid you to ſpeak to him, too?

JULIA.

Hortenſia, tell him, no.

Young BELLAIR.

Well, then, explain yourſelf to him.

JULIA. [*To* Hortenſia.]

It is pleaſant enough, to want me to enter into a converſation with his ſervant. Is he too lofty to ſpeak to me himſelf? Young

Young BELLAIR.

Lovely Julia, I could talk to you till to-morrow, if you would give me leave: but while you are thus obſtinately bent upon not anſwering me, it will be only waſting my words in air.

JULIA. [*To* Hortenſia.]

His words are mighty precious, ſure!

Young BELLAIR.

To convince you how far I am from thinking ſo, I will now explain myſelf to you in the fulleſt manner: You think me a libertine, a ſpendthrift; a wild, perfidious, worthleſs wretch, undeſerving of your love or eſteem.—You make no anſwer!

PACE.

Hold, ſir, I'll anſwer for the lady. [*In a woman's voice.*] Indeed, mr. Bellair, you have drawn a very faithful picture of yourſelf and——

Young BELLAIR.

Inſolent raſcal! you'll oblige me to——

JULIA.

My dear Hortenſia, don't you think Pace has anſwer'd admirably well for me; and that his maſter is very much in the wrong, to find fault with him.

Young BELLAIR.

I muſt confeſs, that for ſome years my conduct has not been the moſt regular: but I declare to you, that in the midſt of my moſt extravagant ſallies, I always preſerv'd your image in my heart. I have never ceas'd to love you; and am now ready to make a ſacrifice to you of all my vanities and follies.

JULIA.

It is my unhappineſs, Hortenſia, that this ſacrifice is offer'd me too late. You know, that my father will have me give my hand to-morrow, to a

perſon of great fortune, to whom he has promis'd me.

Young BELLAIR.

And will you have the weakneſs to comply?

JULIA. [*To* Hortenſia.]

You can witneſs for me, my dear friend, how ſtrenuouſly I have oppoſed this match, and with how little ſucceſs; your brother has only himſelf to blame. It is his exceſſive libertiniſm and extravagance, that has diſguſted my father againſt him; and I myſelf am certain that I could never expect to live happy with a man, who has already committed a thouſand acts of infidelity towards me, and who, I am perſuaded, would ſhew no greater regard to his marriage vow.

Young BELLAIR.

You deceive yourſelf, my lovely and too ſevere Julia. I declare upon my honour, an oath I have ever held moſt ſacred; that you ſhall never again have reaſon to complain of me: and I have taken a firm reſolution never to love any other woman. But what am I ſaying? may perdition be my lot, if I have ever yet ceaſed loving you. The inſinuations of the unworthy companions of my pleaſures, have drawn me from the only object of my real adoration, to revel in debauchery, riot and profuſion; but love has at length made me his convert, and you ſhall find for the future, that I will act as one worthy of a place in your affections. This is the firm, the unalterable determination of my ſoul, ſo help me heaven! and if I ever forfeit the vow I have now made, may all the curſes—— You heed me not, my Julia! will you not vouchſafe me an anſwer?

JULIA. [*Tenderly.*]

Speak to him for me, Hortenſia.

HORTENSIA.

What ſhall I ſay to him?

JULIA.

Any thing; every thing; what you will.

HORTENSIA.

Well then, brother, Julia has ſtill the weakneſs to believe you; ſhe forgives you from her ſoul. [*To* Julia.] Have I anſwer'd right?

JULIA. [*To* Young Bellair.]

Pretty nearly.

Young BELLAIR.

Ah! permit me to devour that hand?

JULIA.

You muſt endeavour to reconcile yourſelf to my father, which I am afraid will be a difficult taſk, for he is greatly incens'd againſt you——Ah! my God, what am I doing? I am ſpeaking to you.

Young BELLAIR.

You are, and kindly too; and I liſten with tranſport to the ſound: I'll inſtantly find out your father, and uſe all my endeavours to —— But what can Frederick want with me again?

SCENE IV.

Enter FREDRICK.

FREDERICK.

Mr. Bellair, I return once more to beſeech you—But here is your lovely ſiſter, I muſt entreat her to aſſiſt me, in endeavouring to prevail on you ——

Young BELLAIR.

You may, if you pleaſe; but depend upon it——

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

Zounds! here's another interruption.

FREDERICK.

I know, not, madam, whether your brother has told you.

Young BELLAIR.

No, Frederick, I have not mentioned a ſingle word——

FREDERICK.

Permit me then, lovely Hortenſia, to inform you myſelf, that I have taken the liberty to aſk you of your brother.

JULIA. [*Haſtily.*]

Well, and has he refuſed you?

FREDERICK.

He has done me the honour to give his conſent.

JULIA.

I am extremely glad of it, and in virtue of the power I pretend to have over his actions, I ratify that conſent fully and in all the forms.

FREDERICK.

You are very obliging; but there is ſtill an obſtacle.

JULIA.

An obſtacle! what obſtacle can there be if all parties are agreed?

Young BELLAIR.

Why, the matter ſtands thus: I do not think it for the credit of my ſiſter or of our family, that ſhe ſhould marry without a portion, and am therefore determined to give her my eſtate in Normandy, as her marriage ſettlement: But mr. Meanwell here, chuſes rather to break off the match than agree to my propoſal; I ſhall now leave it to you, fair Julia, to decide between us.

JULIA.

Well then, I declare that mr. Meanwell is in the right, and you are in the wrong.

HORTEN-

HORTENSIA.

I am of the ſame opinion, and I had rather never be marry'd while I live, than that my brother ſhould beggar himſelf to provide me a huſband.

Young BELLAIR.

But conſider, my dear Hortenſia, I have ruined you by my extravagance, ſo that this is only a reſtitution which is your due, and which all the motives of reaſon and honour compel me to make.

JULIA.

If mr. Meanwell here required this of you, it would be but juſt and honourable in you to comply; but ſince he is determined not to accept it, your generoſity becomes whim and caprice.

HORTENSIA.

Nay, I muſt add for myſelf, that if you were both agreed upon this article, I would die rather than give my conſent to it.

PACE. [*Aſide*]

Bleſſings on your dear, ſweet tongues! Lord, I could kiſs them both with all my ſoul, if I durſt; ſo now our land is out of danger.

FREDERICK.

The victory is mine.

Young BELLAIR.

Well, I find I am condemned, and there is no appealing,

JULIA.

Appealing? If I thought you could heſitate an inſtant, I would never ſpeak to you again; but I hear my father's voice, he is calling for me: adieu for the preſent. Come Hortenſia, we'll go out at the garden gate.

Young BELLAIR.

One word before we part——

JULIA.

I have paſſed ſentence, ſo no reply, or by all that's good——

Young BELLAIR.

I obey—— [*Exeunt* Julia *and* Hortenſia.

FREDERICK.

Come, my dear Bellair, we'll go and dine at my ſiſter's, and there conclude our agreement.

Young BELLAIR.

With all my heart; but Pace muſt come with me.

FREDERICK.

Undoubtedly. Lead the way.

[*Exeunt* Young Bellair *and* Frederick.

SCENE V.

PACE. [*Solus.*]

Heavens make me thankful for that ſound! I ſhall at length have an opportunity of ſatisfying my craving appetite, which I ſhall do with a hearty good will. So maſter of mine, have after you——Ha! [*Going out he ſtarts, and runs ſome paces back.*] Lord have mercy upon us! I'm in a cold ſweat; my ſtrength fails me, and my knees knock together! Is yonder an apparition coming this way? or is it that curſed fellow Truſty I ſee? Zounds, it is he himſelf! but courage! perhaps he brings us news of the old fellow's death.

SCENE VI.

Enter TRUSTY.

PACE. [*Running to him.*]

Ha! my old friend Truſty! whence come you?

TRUSTY.

TRUSTY.

I am come poſt from Pondicherry, in the Eaſt Indies.

PACE.

Hum! that is ſomewhat odd; I never knew that people came poſt by ſea.

TRUSTY.

A ſign of your ignorance; but where is your maſter?

PACE.

Juſt by; but how comes it you are not in mourning?

TRUSTY.

Blockhead, do people wear mourning at ſea?

PACE.

Faith I can't tell; however I ſuppoſe we muſt get ſome made up.

TRUSTY.

For whom?

PACE.

For whom do you think? the old man.

TRUSTY.

What old man? why my maſter was never better in his life.

PACE.

So much the worſe.

TRUSTY.

So much the better, I ſay.

PACE.

So then I ſuppoſe he ſent you over upon ſome particular buſineſs.

TRUSTY.

Yes, he has ſent to ſee whereabouts his ſon was, how going on, and in what ſituation his affairs were, and to carry him an account of all immediately.

PACE.

Immediately! why where the devil is the inquisitive old don?

TRUSTY.

He is waiting for me at a house not above a hundred yards from hence. Hey day! what ails you?

PACE. [*Leaning upon* Trusty's *shoulders.*]

Support me!

TRUSTY. [*Pushing him away.*]

Pry'thee bear your weight yourself; you are as heavy as a lump of lead.

PACE.

Lead, quoth'a? 'Slood I am marble! petrify'd!

TRUSTY.

I am afraid, master Pace, by the fright you seem under, that there has been but scurvy management between your master and you, in our absence; and if so, I would advise you to prepare your back for a sound drubbing.

PACE.

Well, my dream is now out; let who will henceforward say, that dreams are lyes, I'll not believe them: By heaven's there's the old fellow himself! I'll decamp before he gets sight of me.

TRUSTY.

Carry me directly to your master.

PACE.

Ay, ay, come along, my dear Trusty, and you shall help us to hang ourselves.

TRUSTY.

With all my heart, I love to do a friendly turn.

[*Exeunt* Pace *and* Trusty.

SCENE.

SCENE VII.

Enter Old BELLAIR, *as from on board a ſhip.*

Old BELLAIR.

Thanks to Providence, I am at length returned ſafe to my own country, and am once more within ſight of my own houſe. What joy will my unexpected arrival give my ſon? My daughter too! how happy will ſhe be to ſee me. I feel a ſenſible pleaſure in thus agreeably ſurprizing them. But it is ſomewhat extraordinary, that no one is come out of the houſe to welcome me yet; notwithſtanding I ſent Truſty to let them know I was here. Sure they muſt be all abroad; I'll knock at the door. [*Knocks*] Hey, day! what will nobody come? [*Knocks again.*] Hola! are you all dead within? Once more [*Knocks harder.*].

SCENE VIII.

Enter FRONT *at the oppoſite ſide of the ſtage, dreſt in a ſeaman's habit, and talking to himſelf as not ſeeing* Old Bellair.

FRONT.

Theſe old fellows think every one as thick-headed as themſelves; and want to be told a thing a thouſand times over. That is the houſe, I think, that I was directed to.

Old BELLAIR.

Is the devil in the people, to let me knock for an hour together, at my own door? [*Knocks*]

FRONT.

Ay, and ſome one knocking at the door. So much the better, it will ſave me the trouble. [*Going up to* Old Bellair] What chear meſſmate? do you belong to this houſe?

What's that to you? [*Aſide*] What ſea cub is this? I'm a ſtranger to his face.

FRONT.

Avaſt! and and let me give a rally; perhaps I may bring ſomebody.

Old BELLAIR.

What's your buſineſs here?

FRONT.

What's that to you?

Old BELLAIR.

You are an impertinent fellow.

FRONT.

The more like you; they are your own words.

Old BELLAIR.

Well then, to talk in a civiler ſtrain, pray what may bring you here?

FRONT.

Nay, nay, if you fire a gun to leeward, why I'll anſwer your ſignal. You muſt know, I am in chace of a young man they call Bellair, a rakehelly mad fellow, who has been ſpoilt by an old fool of a father, that's in the Indies now: I am told he lives ſomewhere hereabouts.

Old BELLAIR.

Very likely; but what may you want with this ſame rakehelly young fellow, ſpoilt by his fool of a father?

FRONT.

What do I want with him?

Old BELLAIR.

Yes?

FRONT.

You are mighty curious.

Old

Old BELLAIR.

I have my reaſons for being ſo.

FRONT.

Very likely, and I have mine, not to ſatisfy you; my commiſſion is to be delivered to no one but young mr, Bellair himſelf.

Old BELLAIR.

Pray do you know the gentleman?

FRONT.

Yes, as well as I can know a perſon I never ſaw in my life.

Old BELLAIR.

You are a ſtranger here then, I preſume?

FRONT.

I am ſo indeed, for I am but juſt arrived from Pondicherry, where I was born.

Old BELLAIR.

From Pondicherry! are you ſerious? and was you born there?

FRONT.

Why, where the devil would you have me be born?

Old BELLAIR.

Nay, juſt where you pleaſe, it is no buſineſs of mine. But if it will not diſpleaſe you, as I find you are very choleric, may I crave your name?

FRONT.

If I was to tell it you, it would put you out of all patience.

Old BELLAIR.

How ſo?

FRONT.

Why, it is ſo terrible long, that it takes half an hour at leaſt to pronounce it.

Old BELLAIR.

It muſt be a very extraordinary one ſurely?

FRONT.

FRONT.

Your Indian names are as long as a cable; but for the ſake of conveniency, I have ſhortened mine to one ſyllable, and call myſelf——

Old BELLAIR.

What? for heaven's ſake!

FRONT.

Crack.

Old BELLAIR.

A very ſuitable name; for you ſeem to be a great cracker.

FRONT.

So you may think, and be miſtaken, for I am reckon'd the moſt downright, plain dealing man in all India. If ever you ſhould chance to come athwart one of my countrymen, aſk him about captain Crack.

Old BELLAIR.

Oh! you are a captain too?

FRONT.

Yes, of one of the company's ſhips.

Old BELLAIR.

What's her name pray?

FRONT.

Her name?—— Her name?——Why——ſhe is called——ſhe is called—— the Rhinoceros, or the Sea Hedge-hog, for they are one and the ſame name.

Old BELLLAIR. [*Aſide.*]

I am much miſtaken, if this fellow is not a cheat: he's an arch one however; I'll find out, if poſſible, what he wants with my ſon. As you appear [*To the captain.*] to be a very honeſt, plain-dealing man, I ſuppoſe you will hardly make a myſtery of the buſineſs that brings you to this houſe.

FRONT.

Not in the leaſt, I am ſent by the gentleman it belongs to.

Old BELLAIR.

What, by old mr. Bellair?

FRONT.

The ſame; do you know him?

Old BELLAIR.

He is my moſt intimate acquaintance.

FRONT.

Indeed! give me your hand then, for his ſake. He has charged me with a ſmall commiſſion here to his ſon.

Old BELLAIR. [*Aſide.*]

As I thought; an abſolute cheat!——[*To* Front.] Well, is it of any great conſequence?

FRONT.

Why yes. He has ſent over ſix thouſand pounds by me, to deliver to his ſon, as a marriage portion for his ſiſter.

Old BELLAIR. [*Aſide.*]

This is a ſingular adventure!——[*To* Front.] And pray where is the money?

FRONT.

Why I have juſt been paying it into the hands of the old gentleman's lawyer, who has given me his receipt for it, which I am going to carry to young mr. Bellair.

Old BELLAIR.

Indeed, indeed, captain Crack, I am afraid you crack now.

FRONT.

Do you think ſo? Well then, look on this paper?

Old

Old BELLAIR.

Amazement! my lawyer's own hand, by all that's good!

FRONT.

Well, do I crack now?

Old BELLAIR.

I know not what to ſay!

FRONT.

You muſt know, I did not chuſe to depoſit the caſh with the young man: i'cod he would have ſpent it while one could tell the compaſs.

Old BELLAIR.

Indeed! why, is he ſo extravagant ſtill?

FRONT.

Extravagant! he's a downright libertine! After having ſpent all the money his father left for the maintenance of him and his ſiſter, who, they ſay, is a very pretty agreeable young body, he has ſold the old man's houſe, ſpent the money, and is now ſome hundreds worſe than nothing.

Old BELLAIR.

Good heavens! what do I hear? and to whom has he ſold it, pray?

FRONT.

To an old gentleman, an acquaintance of his father's; Allworthy, I think, they call him, who gave him three thouſand pounds for it.

Old BELLAIR. [*Aſide.*]

Perfidious Allworthy! [*To* Front] But where did you learn all thoſe circumſtances, who are but a ſtranger?

FRONT.

From one mr. Meanwell, a worthy gentleman, and in whoſe houſe I am to take up my quarters.

Old

Old BELLAIR.

Accurſed wretch! you have given me my death's wound! Know'ſt thou to whom thou haſt been talking?

FRONT.

Not I, faith; nor do I care. If you have heard any thing that don't pleaſe you, why was you ſo inquiſitive?

Old BELLAIR.

Inſenſible brute! I am young Bellair's father! the ſame from whom you pretended to have receiv'd the three thouſand pounds.

FRONT.

Oh! you are young mr. Bellair's father, are you?

Old BELLAIR.

I am! I am! Oh, patience heaven!

FRONT.

But are you really ſerious?

Old BELLAIR.

Monſter! do I look as if I was jeſting?

FRONT.

What's that to me?

Old BELLAIR.

What's that to thee, baſe fellow?

FRONT.

Why, what a malicious old devil you was, not to let me know it ſooner! However, you are puniſh'd for it, and I am heartily glad of it.

Old BELLAIR.

But, tell me, villain! tell me, who employed you to carry to my ſon the ſtring of lyes that you have been mortifying me with?

FRONT.

FRONT.

Aſk him that ſet me to work? But let me tell you this for your comfort, old dad, that your ſon's adventures are as true, as mine were falſe. This houſe is no longer your's; that is a fact: and ſo you had beſt look out for another; unleſs you have a mind to lie in the ſtreet. This is the advice of your very humble ſervant, captain Crack.

[*Exit* Front.]

SCENE IX.

Old BELLAIR. [*Solus.*]

If what this raſcal has told me is not the mere fruit of his own villainous invention, I am the moſt wretched of fathers, and the moſt fatally generous of all friends! Ah, Allworthy! Allworthy! have you then purchaſed my houſe to ruin my children, and poſſeſs yourſelf of the treaſure I entruſted to your care? What unheard-of infidelity! After this, where is the man in the world worthy of confidence!

SCENE X.

Enter ALLWORTHY.

ALLWORTHY.

Good heaven! may I believe my own eyes? is this my dear friend, mr. Bellair, I ſee once more?

Old BELLAIR.

Your dear friend!

ALLWORTHY.

More dear than ever! Let me embrace you. [*Running with open arms to* Old Bellair, *who puſhes him away.*]

Old

Old BELLAIR.

Keep off! If I have not been told the moſt vile of all falſities, purpoſely to drive me to deſpair, I am amaz'd that you dare appear in my ſight!

ALLWORTHY.

Why, what has been told you?

Old BELLAIR.

That you have purchaſed this houſe of my ſon.

ALLWORTHY.

It is very true.

Old BELLAIR.

And you have the face to own it to me?

ALLWORTHY.

I not only own, but glory in it.

Old BELLAIR.

Juſt heaven! to what a world am I return'd? Why didſt thou not ſuffer the ſea to ſwallow me up? and prevent my—Oh!—[*Falls on the ground.*]

ALLWORTHY.

Mercy on us! he faints!——Within there!—help!——[*Several ſervants run in.*] Aſſiſt to carry this gentleman to a bed, and endeavour to bring him to himſelf. Alas! I hope it will not be too late to undeceive him. Ten thouſand curſes on the wretch who brought him into this condition!——

[*Exit, with ſervants carrying in* Old Bellair.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Old BELLAIR *and* ALLWORTHY.

Old BELLAIR.

My dear Allworthy! thou beſt of friends! forgive the injuſtice I have been guilty of towards you. How ſhall I ever make you reparation? What words, what deeds, can ever diſcharge the vaſt debt of gratitude I lie under to you?

ALLWORTHY.

You may ſoon acquit yourſelf of any obligation to me.

Old BELLAIR.

May I? Oh, name the manner! What, what can I do to teſtify———

ALLWORTHY.

Forgive your ſon.

Old BELLAIR.

That is requiring more than I can do. You would have me ungrateful.

ALLWORTHY.

Ungrateful! how do you mean?

Old BELLAIR.

In pardoning that monſter! No, mr. Allworthy, I only wait to ſee him, and give him my curſe.

ALLWORTHY.

Heaven forbid! Come, come, mr. Bellair, the fooliſh actions he has been guilty of, are rather chargeable

chargeable to the age he lives in, than to the perverſeneſs of his own heart: for, in the midſt of all his extravagancies, he has ſtill ſhewn a diſpoſition for noble principles. And his late offer of making over to his ſiſter, for her marriage-portion, the only ſhadow of ſubſiſtance he had left for himſelf, was ſuch an inſtance of generoſity, as might ſerve to cover over a multitude of faults more atrocious than any he has been guilty of. He determin'd to make himſelf a beggar, to give her a fortune: and ſuch was his generous obſtinacy in that particular, that mr. Meanwell, his ſon, and myſelf, were oblig'd to have recourſe to the ſtratagem which caus'd you ſo much uneaſineſs, in order to preſerve it to him. Certainly you muſt allow this ſhew'd a great fund of honour and goodneſs.

Old BELLAIR.

Vanity, vanity, mere vanity! I am not to be deceiv'd in that manner, mr. Allworthy; and I ſhall put this ſham generoſity of his to a ſevere trial very ſoon.

ALLWORTHY.

And, take my word for it, it will ſtand the harſheſt teſt you can put it to.

Old BELLAIR.

I fancy you would be leſs poſitive, if you knew my deſign.

ALLWORTHY.

Pray, what is it?

Old BELLAIR.

Excuſe me for the preſent. Let us in and ſee my daughter.

ALLWORTHY.

With all my heart. She's at my brother's: I'll wait on you there. [*Going.*]

Old

Old BELLAIR.

Hold!

ALLWORTHY.

What's the matter?

Old BELLAIR.

I'm in a cold ſweat!

ALLWORTHY.

Lord bleſs me! for what?

Old BELLAIR.

I think I ſee that villain Pace coming this way.

ALLWORTHY.

It is him indeed. But why ſhould his preſence give you ſuch concern?

Old BELLAIR.

Becauſe in him, I think, I ſee my ungracious ſon.

ALLWORTHY.

Let me entreat you to calm your reſentment. He comes, perhaps, with ſome meſſage from him.

Old BELLAIR.

Ah, mr. Allworthy! I know too much of him already.

ALLWORTHY.

If you have any friendſhip for me, mr. Bellair, hear what the fellow has to ſay, without being in a paſſion.

SCENE II.

Enter PACE. [*Who ſtands for a while at the corner of the ſtage, bowing to* Old Bellair, *and advances ſtep by ſtep, trembling.*]

Old BELLAIR.

Come hither, mr. raſcal, come hither! What may your buſineſs be with me, hang-dog?

PACE.

PACE. [*Aside.*]

I am likely to have hot work of it, I find; but I muſt e'en ſtand the brunt for my poor maſter.

Old BELLAIR.

How have you the impudence to appear before me?

PACE.

Why, ſir!——Properly ſpeaking, ſir,——it—it—it is not me, ſir—that appears before you.

Old BELLAIR.

Who is it then, raſcal?

PACE. [*Turning his back to him.*]

Why, ſir, it is my back. Strike! beat! bruiſe! maim! lame me! if that will pleaſe you.

Old BELLAIR. [*Aſide to* Allworthy.]

Would not this hypocritical raſcal impoſe upon any one that did not know him? I'll preſently ſhew him to you in his true colours.

ALLWORTHY.

Upon my word the lad affects me!

Old BELLAIR.

You ſhall ſee, you ſhall ſee. [*To* Pace.] Do you ſee this cane?

PACE.

Yes, ſir; it is a very ſizeable one.

Old BELLAIR.

And a very proper one to chaſtiſe thoſe who have loſt all ſenſe of ſhame and duty, eſpecially thoſe faithleſs villains of ſervants, who have the wickedneſs to encourage their giddy maſters in making themſelves infamous by their libertiniſm and extravagance.

PACE.

Sir, as guilty as you may think me, I could very

very ſoon juſtify myſelf, if you would only be pleas'd to grant me the hearing.

Old BELLAIR.

Impudence! I ſuppoſe you would take upon you to juſtify your maſter too?

PACE.

Yes, indeed, ſir, as eaſily as I can myſelf.

Old BELLAIR.

Oh! this is beyond all bearing! [*Offering to ſtrike him.*] Hold, raſcal! take the wages due to your inſolence.

ALLWORTHY. [*Holding him.*]

What are you going to do?

Old BELLAIR.

To beat the villain to a mummy! he——

ALLWORTHY.

Go, Pace, get out of his way.

PACE.

No, ſir, I'll not budge. He ſhall knock my brains out if he pleaſes—Do, ſir, wreak your vengeance on me, if you think it juſt. Uſe me like a dog; like the vileſt ſlave that ever ſerv'd a Turk; ſo you do but treat my maſter like your ſon.

Old BELLAIR.

My ſon! I diſclaim the relation.

PACE.

Indeed, ſir, you do not.

Old BELLAIR.

How! I do not?

PACE.

No, ſir; you neither do, nor can.

Old BELLAIR.

Why, thou abominably impudent fellow, who can have told thee ſo?

PACE.

PACE.

One that I'm ſure tells the truth.

Old BELLAIR.

And who is that?

PACE.

Your own heart, ſir: a heart that ſpeaks as nature inſpires; and that will force you to gentler ſentiments in ſpite of yourſelf.

Old BELLAIR. [*To* Allworthy.]

Was ever ſo conſummate a counterfeit? he would perſuade me out of my ſenſes, if I did not know him well.

PACE.

Believe me, ſir, if you did know me well, you would take my advice, and———

Old BELLAIR.

And what?

PACE.

And after having handſomely reprimanded your ſon for his follies, forgive him; and then——

Old BELLAIR.

Well.

PACE.

Oblige him to marry a woman he was doatingly fond of, that ſhe might, by the power ſhe had over him, reclaim him from all his idle ways.

Old BELLAIR.

And then?

PACE.

And then reward his poor ſervant Pace, for having given you ſuch good advice.

Old BELLAIR. [*Holding up his cane to ſtrike* Pace.]

Well, mr. impudence, I'll begin by the latter part of your advice.

ALLWORTHY.

For ſhame, mr. Bellair; how can you think of ——Go, my lad, go out of his way.

Old BELLAIR.

Stay, raſcal! where is my ſon?

PACE.

He is with young mr. Meanwell, ſir, at his father's.

Old BELLAIR.

Nay, I care not where he is. But what can ſuch a libertine as he do, in the company of ſo ſober a young man as Frederick?

PACE.

Lord, ſir, he has done nothing but weep, and take on, ever ſince he has heard of your arrival.

Old BELLAIR.

Weep! weep, ſay you? diſſembling wretch!

PACE. [*Crying and ſobbing.*]

I'm ſure, if you was to ſee him, it would melt your heart.

Old BELLAIR.

If he had follow'd Frederick's example, he would have had no occaſion to weep at my return: it would have fill'd him with joy.

PACE.

He weeps becauſe he loves you, ſir; and that he knows you hate him. [*Throwing himſelf on his knees before* Old Bellair.] My dear, dear ſir, once more let me beg of you to beat me to a mummy, and forgive him.

ALLWORTHY. [*To* Old Bellair.]

I can ſtand it no longer; the tears are ready to burſt from my eyes.

Old BELLAIR.

Riſe, ſirrah! and get thee gone to thy maſter.

PACE.

PACE. [*Bowing,*]

What muſt I ſay to him, ſir?

Old BELLAIR.

Say to him? that I will never ſee his face again, nor grant him my forgiveneſs while I live.

PACE.

Well then, ſir, if that is your reſolution, I'll go and bring him hither this inſtant, perhaps he may prove a more ſucceſsful advocate in his own cauſe, than poor Pace has been. [*Exit* Pace.

Old BELLAIR.

If he has the inſolence to appear in my preſence! ——The raſcal's gone, without hearing me.

SCENE III.

ALLWORTHY.

Indeed, mr. Bellair, I could not have thought you thus hard-hearted: I declare, the poor lad has ſtrangely affected me, and yet you ſeem quite unmov'd.

Old BELLAIR.

Mr. Allworthy, I have been but too mild and tender; and I am now reſolv'd to puniſh my heart for it's fooliſh fondneſs, by obliging it to become inſenſible to one, whom it has too much lov'd.

ALLWORTHY.

Ah, my good friend, our hearts are not in our own power; and believe me, your's will never hold out againſt a ſon kneeling at your feet, with ſhame, remorſe, and repentance.

Old BELLAIR.

By all that's ſacred, but it ſhall! Was his repentance ever ſo ſincere for the preſent, how can I be ſure he will not return back to his former follies? what reaſon have I to truſt to him?

ALLWORTHY.

Come, come, he would not be the firſt libertine who has turn'd out an example of virtue and ſobriety.

Old BELLAIR.

Well, then, let me aſk you: ſuppoſing I was to demand your daughter Julia in marriage for him, would you conſent to it?

ALLWORTHY.

Why——I muſt tell you, mr. Bellair; a young gentleman, of a conſiderable fortune, has already made propoſals of that nature, and we have actually had one or two meetings upon them.

Old BELLAIR.

But if you was free from any engagements, and I earneſtly ſollicited for my ſon, what would you do?

ALLWORTHY.

To tell you the truth, I ſhould be a little embarraſs'd——The apprehenſion of making my daughter unhappy————

Old BELLAIR.

See, now, how wonderfully well people can preach! but when they come to be put to action—However, you need not fear my giving you the trouble of a refuſal: I have a regard for your daughter, which would not ſuffer me to be acceſſary to her unhappineſs. But we loſe time in talking, when we ſhould be going to your brother's; let us make haſte, leſt we ſhould meet with another interruption. I am afraid that raſcal Pace ſhould bring his maſter here, and the ſight of him would——

ALLWORTHY.

And ſee where they both come——Now, mr. Bellair! now is the time to try, if your heart is ſo obdurate as you would make me believe.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Enter Young BELLAIR *and* PACE.

PACE. [*Aside, to* Young Bellair, *entering.*]
Come along, my dear master; put a good face upon the matter, and resolve to stand the first fury of the storm.

Young BELLAIR. [*Aside.*]
I had best retire; there is nothing but rage painted in his countenance.

PACE. [*Aside.*]
Never fear. Tenderness will succeed, if you attack him but rightly.

Young BELLAIR. [*Advancing by degrees, and in a suppliant manner.*]
May I be permitted, sir, to——

Old BELLAIR. [*Sternly.*]
What would you have with me?

Young BELLAIR.
Your permission to approach you; to throw myself at your feet!

PACE, [*Aside, to* Young Bellair.]
Well begun! keep to that strain.

Old BELLAIR.
You may save yourself the trouble of such a concession; it would too much mortify your pride, and be of no service.

Young BELLAIR.
Will my father, then——

Old BELLAIR.
Call me no longer by that name! I have suffer'd it to be too much abus'd already.

ALLWORTHY.

Be not ſo raſh, my dear friend——You ſhall ſtill reſume that tender appellation, I inſiſt upon it.

Old BELLAIR.

Do not oblige me to refuſe you any-thing, mr. Allworthy, by a fruitleſs interceſſion; for know, I am determin'd never to forgive him—never—never—

Young BELLAIR. [*To* Pace.]

Let us retire, Pace; I have no longer any hopes.

PACE.

What, give back at the firſt repulſe? to him again; repeat the attack with vigour.

Young BELLAIR.

Tho' you, ſir, may cruelly reſolve not to acknowledge me for your ſon, I ſhall never ceaſe to look upon you as my father. The moſt harſh treatment, which, to my ſhame, I muſt acknowledge I have too much merited; the moſt cruel repulſe, ſhall never extinguiſh in my heart thoſe ſentiments of love, reſpect and duty, which I owe you, and which I now feel more forcibly than ever.

PACE. [*To* Young Bellair.]

Bravo! you have it! you have it!

Old BELLAIR.

Theſe profeſſions come now too late; you have exhauſted my patience and affection. Go from my ſight, unworthy wretch, and forget me as I ſhall you.

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

By my ſoul, this ſeems no jeſting matter; I am as much at a loſs now as my maſter.

Young BELLAIR. [*To* Allworthy.]

Sir, ſince my repentance and contrition have no effect on the heart of a once tender and affectionate parent, I have only one reſource left, which is, to

apply

apply to you to intereſt yourſelf in my behalf, to endeavour to procure my pardon, unworthy as I appear of it: a friend, perhaps, may obtain that, which a rejected, hated, tho' repentant child, dare not ſue for.

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

Admirably hit off! Sure this will do ſomething.

ALLWORTHY.

Mr. Bellair, let me on my knees intercede for your unhappy ſon. [*Kneels.*]

Old BELLAIR. [*Running to him.*]

Mr. Allworthy, you cover me with confuſion; let me conjure you, by our long friendſhip, not to diſtreſs me in this manner.

ALLWORTHY.

Then by that ſame friendſhip, let me entreat you will permit your ſon to crave your pardon and bleſſing himſelf. [*To* Young Bellair.] Come forward, ſir, come forward, and try if this parent's heart is totally inflexible.

Young BELLAIR. [*Kneeling to his father.*]

Sir!——Oh, ſir!———

PACE. [*Half aſide to* Young Bellair.]

Call him father.

Young BELLAIR. [*The ſame.*]

I dare not; he has diſclaim'd the title.

ALLWORTHY. [*To* Young Bellair.]

And can you ſtand all this?

Old BELLAIR. [*To his ſon.*]

Riſe.

Young BELLAIR.

No; I will never move from hence, till I have obtain'd your promiſe of forgiveneſs.

PACE. [*Falling on his knees on the other ſide of* Old Bellair.]

No, ſir; here will we die together, if you prove relentleſs.

Old BELLAIR. [*To his son.*]

Once more, I say, sir, rise.

ALLWORTHY.

In the name of nature, call him son.

Old BELLAIR. [*After a little pause.*]

Well, then——Rise, my son.

ALLWORTHY.

One embrace, for pity's sake.

Old BELLAIR.

No, no; it is not come to that——Hear me, son? since you are desirous I should yet call you by that name; I grant you my pardon on one condition only, which I require you to accept, however severe it may seem. Will you engage your honour so to do?

Young BELLAIR.

I am ready, without the least hesitation——

Old BELLAIR.

If you knew how dear you are to purchase your pardon ——

Young BELLAIR.

Provided you restore me to a place in your affection, no price can be too dear for me to——

Old BELLAIR.

Well, we shall see.

Young BELLAIR.

Declare your will, sir.

ALLWORTHY. [*To* Old Bellair.]

I am all impatience to know your intention.

Old BELLAIR.

Know, then, that I am possess'd of a more plentiful fortune than ever, by the death of my brother, who has left all his to me.

Young

Young BELLAIR.

I heartily felicitate you on this happy event.

Old BELLAIR.

But this is not all: I am to acquaint you, likewiſe, that at my departure for the Eaſt-Indies, I bury'd a conſiderable treaſure in the garden of this houſe which you ſo imprudently ſold; and of which this generous friend, here, was the only confident.

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

Ah, if we had known that, it ſhould have quickly changed maſters.

Old BELLAIR.

Now to puniſh you for this, and the reſt of your follies and extravagancies, I inſiſt that you renounce all right and title to this money, and alſo to your uncle's eſtate, which is otherwiſe to revert to you at my death; I intend to beſtow them both on your ſiſter, as a reparation for the injury you have done her, in ſquandering away the fortune of the family. Have you the reſolution to purchaſe my forgiveneſs on theſe terms?

Young BELLAIR.

And is this all you have to require of me?

PACE. [*Aſide.*]

And enough too, I think.

Young BELLAIR.

Send for a lawyer this inſtant, and I will ſign all you require: that done, I'll retire to my lands in Normandy, the income of which will be more than ſufficient to maintain me, in the manner I intend to live for the future. If Pace, here, will go with me, I ſhall deſire no other attendance.

PACE.

If I will? my dear ſir, I would follow you the world over. We will live like two hermits: and if

you, gentlemen, will come and ſee us ſometimes; we'll treat you with new milk, freſh butter, nuts, and cheeſe.

ALLWORTHY. [*To* Old Bellair.]

Will this pleaſe you?

Old BELLAIR.

I am ſatisfy'd.

Young BELLAIR.

But may I hope to be reſtored to your favour?

Old BELLAIR.

Keep your promiſe, and I'll not break mine.

[Young Bellair *kneels, and kiſſes his father's hand.*]

SCENE V.

Enter MEANWELL *and* FREDERICK.

MEANWELL.

What do I ſee? how rejoic'd am I to behold you reconcil'd. This happy event adds a double reliſh to the pleaſure I have in ſeeing you once more.

Old BELLAIR.

My good friend, mr. Meanwell, I am overjoyed to embrace you again.

MEANWELL.

Permit my ſon to pay his reſpects to you, likewiſe.

Old BELLAIR.

Moſt gladly. Come to my arms, thou worthy ſon of a deſerving father! how bleſt are you in each other; and how much do I envy your happineſs.

MEANWELL.

Have you not forgiven your ſon?

PACE.

Yes; but it has coſt us dear.

MEANWELL.

What do you mean?

PACE.

My maſter will tell you.

FREDERICK. [*To* Old Bellair.]

Give me leave to ſay, ſir, that your ſon has well deſerv'd the pardon you grant him, by the noble ſacrifice he was about to make his ſiſter. You are, without doubt, inform'd of the cauſe of this generous offer: I therefore leave it to my father, to aſk you, if what we have propos'd is agreeable to you?

Old BELLAIR.

Yes gentlemen, and the more ſo, as my daughter has it now in her power, to acknowledge your generoſity, as ſhe is alone to inherit the family fortune, and that which I am entitled to by the death of my brother.

MEANWELL.

How! ſhe alone to inherit it?

Young BELLAIR.

Yes, gentlemen, for I have made over all my right therein to my ſiſter.

MEANWELL.

And has your father conſented to it?

Old BELLAIR.

I have not only conſented, but inſiſt upon his performance of it, as the only condition, on which I take him into favour again, he has given me his honour——

FREDERICK.

And I, on my ſide, declare by all that I hold dear——

SCENE

SCENE VI.

Enter HORTENSIA.

But ſee my daughter! come to my arms, my dear child! thou only comfort of my declining age.

HORTENSIA.

Oh! how ſhall I return ſufficient thanks to heaven, for having preſerved my deareſt father from ſo many dangers, and reſtoring him at length to my ardent wiſhes. O ſir! how bleſt is your daughter now? Thus lock'd in your arms, and receiving your bleſſings, what have I to wiſh for more?

Old BELLAIR.

Would you not wiſh, my dear Hortenſia, I ſhould give your hand to Frederick?

HORTENSIA.

Hortenſia, I have no wiſh, but what is warranted by your pleaſure.

Old BELLAIR.

Well, my dear child, I will reward your duty, by aſſuring you, that nothing can give me greater ſatisfaction than ſuch an union. [*To* Frederick.] Young gentleman, give her your hand. How! do you heſitate?

FREDERICK.

I do.

HORTENSIA. [*Aſide.*]

Perfidious wretch!—Wretched Hortenſia!

FREDERICK.

When you know, adorable Hortenſia, the reaſons that ———

HORTENSIA. [*Turning from him with diſdain.*]

Sir, I give myſelf no concern about knowing them!

FREDERICK.

And yet you muſt be inform'd why I act in this manner.

HORTENSIA.

Sir, it is indifferent to me how you act.

FREDERICK.

You muſt be inform'd, I ſay, that mr. Bellair, in conſequence of our marriage, is to diſinherit your brother, and transfer his whole fortune to you, and inſiſts that I ſhould take your hand on thoſe terms. Now anſwer me, ſhould I ſuffer my wife to be enrich'd by the ſpoils of a brother?

HORTENSIA. [*To* Old Bellair.]

Is what I hear, true, ſir?

Old BELLAIR.

Yes, daughter, I am reſolv'd to make you at once completely rich and happy.

HORTENSIA.

And I now make a ſolemn oath, not to accept of what you offer me; and call heaven, and every one preſent, to witneſs to the ſincerity of this declaration.

FREDERICK. [*Taking her hand, and kiſſing it.*]

Excellent maid! I lov'd you before; but now I adore you. [*To* Old Bellair.] Sure, ſir, this generous conceſſion muſt touch you!

MEANWELL.

Would you drive your ſon out to live on a common, and deprive your old age of the comfort of ſeeing him ſettled?

Old BELLAIR.

Settled! where is the woman raſh enough to venture on him?

SCENE

SCENE the Last.

Enter JULIA *haſtily.*

JULIA.

I am the perſon, if my father will give his conſent.

Old BELLAIR.

Conſider, young lady——

JULIA.

Sir, I am not now to conſider of it. I know your ſon better than you do. The goodneſs of his heart is a ſufficient ſecurity to me for his behaviour as a huſband. If he has been guilty of ſome follies, they have been owing to his too great attachment to the gay world, which now he knows, and deſpiſes as he ought: I therefore rely upon his being convinc'd of his errors, and am certain I ſhall not be deceiv'd.

HORTENSIA.

My amiable friend! how much am I indebted to you? Perſiſt in your reſolution; a reſolution, I am perſuaded you will never repent. It is the greateſt proof you can give me of your friendſhip.

Young BELLAIR.

Too generous, too lovely Julia! this generoſity adds doubly to my contrition and ſhame: and alas! I am now leſs worthy than ever of the goodneſs you expreſs towards me. My father has inflicted the puniſhment due for all my follies. He has diſinherited me.

JULIA.

But I'm not diſinherited; at leaſt I hope not. Say, ſir, [*To* Allworthy.] will you puniſh me for the affection I have for mr. Bellair, by depriving me of my inheritance?

ALLWORTHY.

ALLWORTHY.

On the contrary, my child, you have my full conſent to offer him your hand, and with it all your fortune I will inſtantly break off the engagements I was about to enter into, with the young gentleman who has made propoſals to me concerning you. For I have now as earneſt a deſire to ſee you young mr. Bellair's wife, as I was once averſe to it. Since his father proves thus inflexible, I will adopt him for my own ſon: I have enough for you both.

Old BELLAIR.

No, ſir, you have not enough.

ALLWORTHY.

I am richer than you imagine, ſir.

Old BELLAIR.

And I more indulgent than you think. I have done violence to my heart too long. Nature and the father will be obey'd. I relent! I forgive! Come then, my ſon! come and receive in my arms that bleſſing, which your filial ſubmiſſion and noble ſentiments deſerve. The trial I have made of your heart fills me with joy and ſatisfaction. I now releaſe you from your promiſe, and reſtore you all my affection. Son! daughter! friends! you, lovely maid; [*To* Julia.] and generous young man, [*To* Frederick.] come and ſharethat love and eſteem, of which you have ſhewn yourſelves ſo worthy.

PACE.

And poor Pace, I hope, may be admitted to a ſhare.

ALLWORTHY.

Moſt certainly; and ſhall be well rewarded for thy attachment and fidelity to thy maſter. Now let us in, and ſend for a prieſt and a lawyer, to conclude

conclude theſe double nuptials, which will make the common happineſs of us all.

PACE. [*To* Young Bellair.]

Well, ſir, I think I labour'd hard to obtain your pardon; but you ſee you're condemn'd to loſe your liberty at laſt.

Young BELLAIR.

I rejoice at it; for know, Pace, I am now as weary of riot and diſorder, as I was once fond of it. Convinc'd by experience, that nothing can be more fatal in life, than to give the reins to one's paſſions; and that true happineſs is to be found only in virtue and ſobriety. [*Exeunt omnes.*

END of VOL. II.

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